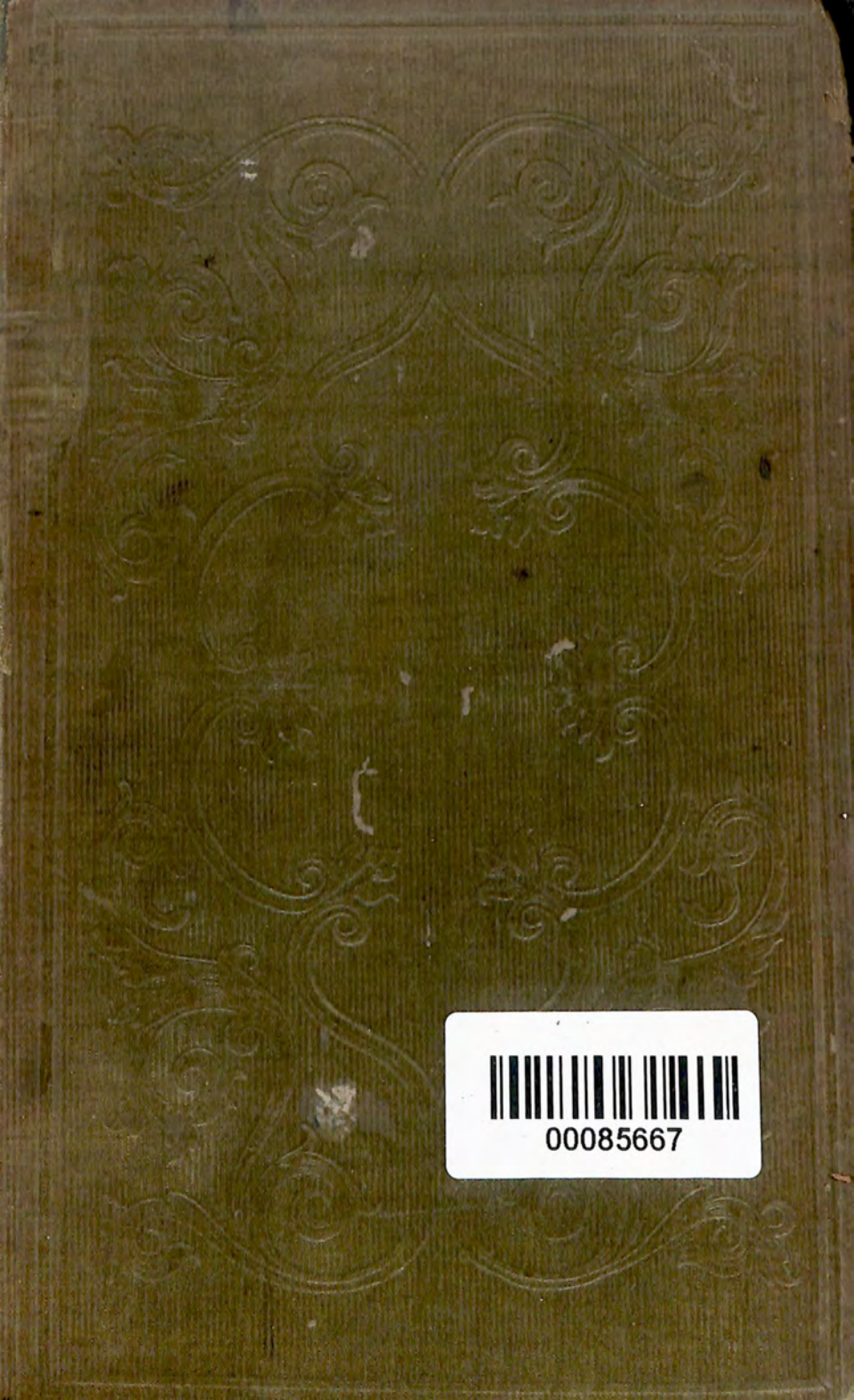

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OF THE

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# A PILGRIMAGE

TO

# AUVERGNE,

FROM

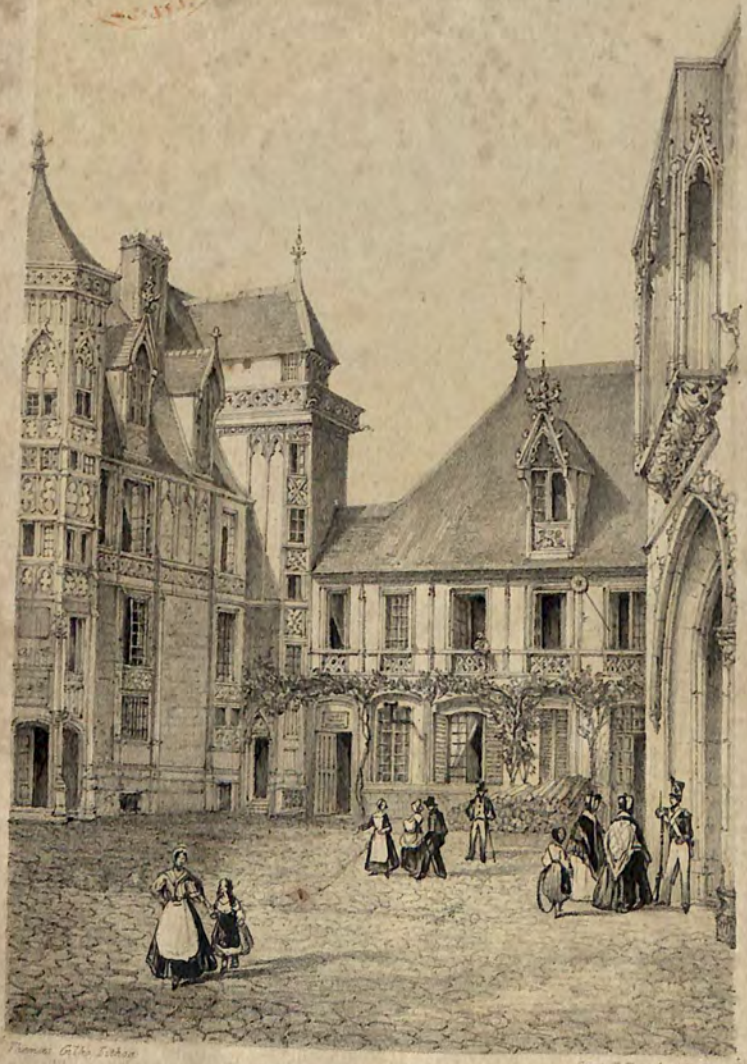
# PICARDY TO LE VELAY.

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VOL. I.

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LONDON:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
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BOURGES.
House of Jacques Coeur

London, Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1841.

# A PILGRIMAGE

TO

# AUVERGNE,

FROM

# PICARDY TO LE VELAY

BY LOUISA STUART COSTELLO,

AUTHOR OF

"A SUMMER AMONGST THE BOCAGES AND THE VINES,"
"THE QUEEN MOTHER," ETC.

85667 a1 L. C.

"As soon as we dismounted at our inns, I wrote all down, whether it was late or early, that posterity might have the advantage of it, for there is nothing like writing for the preservation of events."—*Johnes's Froissart.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
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1842.

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THESE VOLUMES ARE INSCRIBED

TO

THE LADY AUGUSTA GORDON,

THE KINDEST AND TRUEST OF FRIENDS;

WHO,

UNDER VARIED CIRCUMSTANCES, HAS CONTINUED THE SAME STEADY SUPPORT, FELT THE SAME ANXIOUS INTEREST, AND AFFORDED SOME OF THE HAPPIEST MOMENTS, TO

HER ATTACHED AND AFFECTIONATE

LOUISA STUART COSTELLO.

London, Dec. 1841.

# TO THE READER.

I HAD long felt a great desire to visit Auvergne, its extinct volcanoes, boiling springs, and antique towns, the scenes of so many of the romantic histories related by Froissart, and, in the spring of 1841, set out from England with the intention of doing so; but as the whole of the route I chose from Picardy, through Artois, Valois, Champagne, and Burgundy, was new to me, I paused at every place of interest, and found so many, that I was much longer in arriving at my destined *bourn* than I had calculated on. As I met with such numerous and varied subjects worthy to arrest attention, I cannot but hope that the record I have made of my impressions may excite the same pleasure in the minds of my readers, and that those who felt amused in following my wanderings *amongst the Bocages and the Vines* of the Loire, will not be sorry to ac-

company me where *the Vines* of Burgundy and Champagne extend, and will feel some curiosity to be introduced to the Dômes and the Puys of one of the most singular and picturesque parts of France, seldom visited and less known to the English traveller than it would be were its beauties appreciated as they deserve. Auvergne is, in fact, the Switzerland of France, and possesses features of its own, nowhere to be met with except in this region of basaltic rocks and chaotic valleys. Not a peak or a glen but has been a scene of wild adventure, and the lover of novelty may there hail the appearance of objects which his travels in other countries have not presented him with.

To the poet and the painter Auvergne and Le Velay offer new and charming sites, and nowhere could their genius be called forth with greater pleasure. No drawback of bad roads or wretched inns need now deter the lover of the picturesque, for a *chemin de velours* is open to all travellers, from one end of France to the other, and the difficulties of occasional cross-roads are amply repaid by the beauties to which they lead.

Dec. 1841.

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A

# PILGRIMAGE TO AUVERGNE.

## CHAPTER I.

The Bones of St. Omer. — Treasures. — Bethune. — Hortense la Picarde.— Female Presence of Mind. — Roman Roads.— Virtue of Holy Water. — Manna. — The Sublime. — Civil Wars of the 10th Century. — The Castle of Peronne.— Charles the Simple. — Mysterious Opening.

CROSSING the Field of the Cloth of Gold between Guines and Ardres, the road from Calais to St. Omer is bordered with fine trees, and, for several miles, runs by the side of a pleasant canal, but there is little to interest the traveller throughout the extent of the ten leagues he has to go before a series of handsome avenues announces the approach to the ancient city once celebrated for its abbey and its churches, but now one of the dullest towns in France. It is, however, worth while to remain a few hours in St. Omer, even

though you have to walk to the end of the ill-paved streets, where, in a faubourg, still stands a precious monument of architectural art, the beautiful tower of St. Bertin. It is even desirable that the lover of the picturesque should mount the three hundred steps, and view the immense extent of country spread out at his feet, for, from this height the town itself has a pleasing aspect, all the gardens of the *bourgeoisie* being collected together in a space without the walls and forming a kind of Mosaic floor of beautiful appearance and considerable extent. Nine towns, the frontiers of Belgium, the hill of Cassel, and a wide plain apparently fertile and smiling are seen from this commanding height.

All that remains of the Abbey proves its former splendour: nothing can exceed the elegance of its pillars, the grace and lightness of its tower, but little is left to mark out the precincts of a building once the most considerable and important in the country. The land was granted to St. Bertin in 659 by a lord called Aldroald, at the request of St. Omer, whose bones were laid in sanctuary within the walls of the monastery. Torn from their recess by force of arms the relics figured for some time at St. Quentin, but, after a struggle between the *men of peace* who were at the head of each establishment, the bones were once more

placed in the cloisters of St. Bertin, and were perhaps the very treasures discovered in 1830, when some of the "old stones" were removed to serve as materials for the new Hôtel de Ville. Certain it is, that a small chest containing bones and inscribed with Gothic letters was found in a wall of the cloisters; but it appears that St. Omer possesses few antiquarians either learned enough to decipher the inscription, or curious enough to care what has become of the relic. At the same time, while the work of destruction was going on, and splendid capitals, delicate pillars, and carved blocks of marble were thrown down in one general ruin, destined to a future work of *utility*, a row of tombs appeared to the astonished eyes of the workmen, each containing a nun "in her habit, as she lived,"—the serge of the dresses still strong and fresh: but the pickaxe and spade soon confounded them in the surrounding dust, and except that the holy train may occasionally be seen winding their way up the three hundred steps, roused by the hollow voice of the great bell Bertine, they have disappeared for ever from mortal sight.

There was once a famous chalice at St. Bertin of massive gold above a foot high, the cup half a foot deep, and the circumference in proportion: a *patène* of gold more than a foot in diameter, a silver *chasse* for the bones of St. Omer, rich plate of

silver and gold, and different *objets* in gold *émail*, the work of a celebrated Abbé Guillaume, a golden cross presented by Charlemagne, and a precious relic of miraculous virtue, no other than the head of St. Bertin; but, as may well be imagined, no vestige of any of these wonders remains. There were formerly two refectories, both fitted up with great luxury and attention to convenience, one appropriated to summer indulgence, the other for winter, and here the pious recluses appeared sufficiently to enjoy themselves: their beautiful gardens were watered by the limpid river Lia, which furnished them with excellent fish, game of all sorts was to be procured in their forests and plains, and they were protected by powerful knights whose interest it was to keep them in good humour. From their tower their own men at arms watched over the safety of the town, and its gates were never opened till their signal had been given that all was secure beyond. Captive monarchs became the slaves of that proud and powerful community, and Childeric, the last of the Merovingians, was here forced to adopt the cowl and quit a dungeon for a cell. No pride, no glory is left now at St. Bertin except that of the guardian of the stupendous tower who looks upon everything with contempt which has not reference to his beloved bells and the ruins which he appears to regard with

exclusive affection. We indulged him by remaining till his favourite Bertine rang the hour of seven in the evening, and departed nearly stunned by the sound which she sent from her seclusion half over the Pas de Calais.

The cathedral of Nôtre Dame at St. Omer and the church of St. Denis have both features worthy of admiration, and are clean, well kept, and well restored. The Rue Royale is wide, open, and very long, but *morne* and deserted, and the stones of the pavement so pointed and rugged that it would appear as if there was no traffic.

We continued our route, which pointed to Champagne, by Bethune, the church of which is singular and possesses much beauty. The roof is very fine and the pillars of great delicacy, but the interior is disfigured by the paltry ornaments of its altars. The belfry tower presents a remarkable and picturesque appearance, and the little town is altogether clean, wide and handsome.

Our *compagnon de voyage*, called Hortense by a dandy elderly gentleman in a flowered dressing-gown, who put her into the coach, was a remarkably pretty girl, so young that we were greatly surprised when she proclaimed herself a married woman, going to Bapaume to purchase mourning, for which it is celebrated, for her family, on occasion of the death of her husband's

father, a patriarch of ninety. She was from Amiens—a Picarde, and held in contempt the whole of Artois, where she assured us we should find nothing interesting—that Arras was a blank, and Bapaume a *trou:* we found her tolerably right in both particulars. But for the luxuriant hedges of hawthorn in full bloom, we should have found nothing to admire on the road, and were only struck with the neatness of the villages through which we passed, and the peculiarity of the Flemish-shaped roofs, *vandyked* and ornamented with variegated bricks; all, however, appeared to tell of wealth and ease, and the appearance of the peasantry, neat, clean and cheerful-looking, atoned in some measure for the flatness, coarseness and uninteresting character of the whole country as far as Arras.

From the incessant noise of our vehicle as we hurried over the paved road, we were glad to be delivered, and could scarcely persuade ourselves that any works of newer date than those of the Romans had occurred in Artois since the period when they traversed the country with their victorious chariots, and made ways so extensive that a more modern race attributed them to supernatural agency. These Roman ways are however now only followed by the peasantry from village to village, and to them are *known* the secrets of their con-

struction by the Father of Ill, who once exerted his skill in these parts, hoping to obtain possession of the soul of a young farmer who imprudently taunted him with inability to make a paved road of a certain extent between midnight,—the hour at which they probably met on the marsh,—and cock-crow. So rapidly did the Evil One set to work, and so solid and far spreading became the road he made, that but for the presence of mind of the young man's wife, his soul must have fallen a prey to the destroyer; she, however, hit upon the notable expedient of pulling the cock by the tail as he sat at roost, and thus caused him to utter his shrill salutation to day earlier than usual. The artful One was defeated, and his road, on the very verge of completion, left as a monument to after ages of the triumph of female wit. About a league from Arras may still be seen two enormous stones, brought there under the infernal wing, and cast down in haste when he was forced to desist in his enterprise. Another time it is related that a poor monk having been charged to form a long and difficult road, impatient of the labour he underwent, consented to accept the assistance of a doubtful-looking stranger, who offered his aid "for a consideration." The work went on and was soon entirely completed, when to his horror the monk found that his soul was the price to be

paid. He had nothing now to do but to entreat the forbearance of his fellow workman till a candle three inches long should be consumed. Contrary to his usual caution, the fiend consented, and the wily monk, hurrying to the neighbouring church, plunged the candle into a vase of holy water, by which means it remained entire to the end of time, and the howling and outwitted enemy fled in despair, leaving the fine road free for all comers.

The time is past when, according to St. Jerome, a rain fell in Artois, so rich that it rendered the country a perfect garden, and with it came flakes of *wool* of such wonderful property that it nourished the earth in a miraculous manner, and was called *manna*. At Arras the shrine has disappeared, in which a specimen of this wondrous wool was preserved; the manufactories are gone, where this or some other wool was woven into tapestry famous throughout the world; the ancient cathedral exists no longer, and is replaced by a modern building of questionable taste, heavy and vast, and devoid of interest.

The squares are large and desolate looking, but singular from the shape of the roofs, which are in the Flemish style. The Hôtel de Ville is a building of the middle ages, and is very curious, with much detail about it, the windows greatly orna-

mented; but the tower has been rebuilt in bad taste, and is surmounted by a crown, which has a strange, incongruous appearance. We met here with an instance of French familiarity and vanity, combined with a certain wish to oblige, which, though we afterwards became sufficiently acquainted with similar traits in our rambles, struck us from the contrast with English manners. We were seeking for one of the streets, and inquired our way of a *bonne*, who was following her mistress through one of the squares: she instantly left her charge and her lady to enter into conversation with us, inquiring our reasons for leaving England and our motives for seeking Arras, obliged us with an account of her own position, informed us of her station in life, which was inferior to her birth, her *godmother* being the wife of the mayor of Peronne, and her desire for change having induced her to condescend to fill the office she now held. After talking a great deal, and leaving the information we asked to the last, she left us and rejoined her mistress, to whom she evidently recounted her adventure with the foreigners who had accosted her, with such embellishments to the narrative as might best suit her hearer.

Unsuccessful in discovering any object of interest, we wandered about Arras, disappointed in

its appearance. Could we have sobered our minds down to the admiration of its *fabrics* of iron and sugar, we need not have complained, for a person of whom we inquired the nature of its commerce entreated us to lose no time in visiting the manufactures. That of iron, he assured us, was the most important in France, and we were content to take his word for it, not then being aware, as we were in due time, that wherever iron-works are carried on, that spot is vaunted as producing the best in the kingdom: perhaps, as all is indifferent, one town has as much right to be celebrated for its iron as another. Our informant, seeing that we had the bad taste to show our indifference about the first establishment of which he boasted, changed the object of his eulogium, and, with an air of enthusiasm, begged us to visit the sugar mills—"voilà ce qu'il y a de sublime!" he exclaimed. Even this, however, and being further assured that the director was an Englishman, did not induce us to walk in the sun along a very dusty road to see the immortal buildings which have effaced the glories of the magnificent cathedral now no more.

Arras must have been a very strong town, as its remaining defences prove: the fortifications are being restored with great activity, and it bids fair to offer as much resistance as ever.

Troops were quartered in all the villages through which we passed, and every thing looked warlike. The country beyond Arras continues flat and ugly, corn-fields and windmills alone appearing for leagues, and Bapaume, the goal of La Belle Picarde's voyage, presented its evidences of mourning in most lugubrious style. Black draperies floated from every door and window, and covered the fronts of the houses, telling of woe in all directions. The rain at this moment of our journey began to descend violently, and we rejoiced to enter the inn yard of the hotel at Peronne, where we received a gentle greeting from a tame lamb which ran about amongst the monstrous dogs belonging to the stable: a tenement which is always in evidence before the windows of the chambers reserved for travellers as the best.

We had now entered that part of the country in early times the scene of fierce contention between the rival chiefs who struggled for mastery in France. Here the counts of Vermandois long exercised their power; here they fought, pillaged, ravaged, and subjected the inhabitants to all kinds of cruelty and oppression. Here were carried on in their greatest fury those civil wars of the tenth century, which tore France to pieces. Peronne, St. Quentin, Laon, Soissons, Château Thierry,

all sent forth armies of robbers to desolate the land. Laymen and churchmen alike combined against the peace of their native country, and the whole of the north of France was a prey to war and its horrors. Here the Franks, the Normans, and Lotharingiens contended unceasingly, putting up and throwing down the kings they had chosen on either side, and slaughter and murder reigned triumphant.

According to a picture drawn at the time, things were in a condition which appeared without hope or remedy. "The towns," says a chronicle of the period, "are depeopled, the country changed to a desert: as for the monasteries, some are ruined or burnt by the pagans; others, despoiled of their possessions and reduced to almost nothing, retain scarcely a vestige of order. Monks, canons, nuns have no longer legitimate superiors, in consequence of the abuse which has permitted strangers (laymen) to govern them. Pressed by necessity, they quit the cloister, and mingling with the people live a secular life. We behold in monasteries consecrated to God lay abbots with their wives, their children, their soldiers and their dogs. How can such abbots make those rules obeyed which they are even incapable of reading? Each man does as he pleases, contemning both divine and human laws and the ordinances of

bishops. Nothing is seen but violence against the poor and weak, and outrages and robberies of the goods of the clergy. No sooner is a bishop dead, than the most powerful cast themselves instantly upon the possessions of his church, as though they had belonged to him exclusively, which, even in that case, would be contrary to all law or right."

In vain were anathemas launched against the spoilers of the church; not a single baron would give up any part of his ill-gotten property, and *le droit du plus fort* was alone acknowledged.

Centuries since have passed, and time has effaced the memory of these doings; the power of a romancer can, however, revive them, and no one who enters the town of Peronne fails to think first of Louis XI, and secondly of that unfortunate Charles the Simple, whose fate recurred to the wily monarch when he found himself caught in the toils, and trod the floor of the same dungeon where the ill-fated king lingered out his melancholy existence. Walter Scott is as well known at Peronne as at Tours, and his fine romance is cited by the guides in the same manner, when the castle is shown. We lost no time in paying it a visit, and regretted to see how little remained of the once extensive fortress. It is, however, undergoing repair, and some of the

towers are kept up in their original strength. The dungeons and ground-floors are those parts of the original building to which tradition attaches, and these are as horrible and mysterious as any lover of the romantic can desire. First you are shown the chambers occupied at different periods by two kings of such opposite character; and it is easy to imagine the misgivings of the crafty Louis when the doors closed upon him, and he discovered the style of palace into whose recesses he had imprudently suffered himself to be led.

One can trace the steps of Balue as he retreated from the dangerous interview with his suspicious master, and the tremulous voice of Louis seems to echo through the vaults, as a word saved the devoted churchman from the tender mercies of Petit André. Whether the great poet ever visited these walls or not, he could not have described the horror of the moments passed by Louis better. Hideous and fearful is the room, lighted by one narrow window, to which a chain and bars are still attached, which was appropriated to his entertainment; and close by is the recess where Charles the Simple breathed his last. A breach in the flooring at one end discloses a grate, through the thick iron bars of which the waters of the dull black river roll along, making the gloom still more horrible by its plashing sound beneath

the feet of the captive. A hollow in the thickness of the wall contained the bed or the straw on which Charles lay. Whether Louis was accommodated with a couch more costly, tradition does not say; but no tapestry or ornament could conceal the fact that walls of twelve feet thick hemmed in a suite of chambers even with the moat of the castle, that the thick black river yawned like a gulf in most convenient vicinity for murder, that no light was admitted but through slits barred with iron, and nothing but circling ramparts was to be seen beyond, though now a part of the country can be distinguished through the opening. In the court, just beside the entrance to this tower, is a large grating to an arched door, which opens on a subterranean way formerly leading under the bed of the Somme to the vaults of a neighbouring castle, designated "Nul me Frotte," from whence Charles le Téméraire came secretly and silently, and surprised king Louis while in the chapel, where he was fruitlessly invoking one of his favourite Virgins. It is said, that when he heard the clank of steel steps near, he inquired if his guards had brought his enemy prisoner, and was struck with terror on learning that Charles came as a conqueror to dictate terms to himself.

The site only of this chapel is now seen; there

is no want of the usual frightful *oubliettes*, which we had become familiar with in our former rambles amongst old châteaux; but with shuddering horror we declined visiting the damp dark towers in which they are situated. In roaming above, amidst the ruins, a square hole was pointed out to us, which tradition says was used as a means of conveying to the captive Louis the provisions allotted him; but this would have been throwing off the mask indeed, and probably the legend refers to an earlier prisoner, of which there were many, who doubtless groaned in the same miserable retreat, victims of tyranny, perhaps tyrants themselves.

Although for seven years Charles the Simple languished here, and is said to have died of starvation, his detainer Héribert did not desire his death, as he kept him as a means of controling the usurper of his rights; and there is little reason to imagine that he treated him with all the rigour which was exercised towards an enemy, however sad the sojourn must have been. Certain however it is, that the angular hole above communicates with the cell below, for what purpose used it is now difficult to say.

## CHAPTER II.

Charles the Simple.—Marshes.—Château of Ham.—Eloquent Chef.—The Carillon.—Female Garçon.—Account of Laon.—Arrival at Laon.

Poor Charles, though he might have deserved the somewhat rude surname, bestowed on him by his subjects, of Simple or Sot, certainly did not merit the sobriquet of *lâche-cœur*, which was also given him; for he fought fiercely and valiantly, exposing himself to every danger, and being always in the thickest of the *mêlée*. It appears that at the beginning of his reign he allowed his confidence to be entirely gained, and all his actions directed, by a certain knight of little note called Haganon, who seems to have possessed all the spirit, sense, and cunning wanted by his indolent master. Charles, encouraged by his favourite, began to show the contempt he felt for the nobles who surrounded his throne, and on all occasions exalted Haganon to honour, bestowing on him riches and benefits to the exclusion of all others. Abbeys and lands were heaped upon him, and the king even dispossessed his aunt,

Rothilde, daughter of Charles le Chauve, to give her abbey of Chelles to his beloved friend.

The barons, headed by Robert, Count of Paris and Duke of France, indignant at this proceeding, rose in a body and proclaimed their disgust. When all were assembled in the *champ* at Soissons, according to custom, to treat of the affairs of the kingdom, by unanimous consent each cast down *des fétus de paille* on the ground, as a symbol that they renounced and rejected Charles as their sire, "because he was a king of a coward heart;" and, separating themselves from him, they left him alone in the midst of the field. They repaired to another place to consult, when a certain Count Hugues, who was a secret friend to the king, addressed them thus: "Oh, courageous Franks, you are to blame. Why have you thus shamefully abandoned your lord? A great part of France is on his side, and evil will betide us if we quit him in this manner. I will approach him and will pierce him with my sword; for better is it that he should be slain than left to punish us hereafter." So saying, the knight spurred forward his horse, as though he would have rushed upon the king; but when he had reached him he gave him this counsel: "Send me back to those people; let me be your messenger to them, and entreat them to remain a year longer under your domi-

nion; at the end of which time, if they have not reason to be content with your conduct, they may quit you ignominiously."

It appears that this advice was followed, and, after some discussion, the nobles consented to make the trial: however, the reconciliation did not last long. Charles would not give up his favourite, and finding the rebellious nobles too strong for him, they fled together from Laon beyond the Meuse, where they were reinforced by a great number of Lotharingians. Charles collected all his friends who still held in reverence the ancient blood of Charles Martel and Charlemagne, and re-entering France pillaged and burnt all on their passage, advancing as far as Epernay, but was obliged to fall back to the Laonnais, the chief town of which, however, he was unable to recover, Laon having fallen into the hands of the men of Count Robert of Paris, together with all the *treasure* of Haganon. The king was obliged to retreat, and Count Robert was crowned king at St. Remy de Reims.

A powerful adversary now started up against Charles in the person of Héribert, Count of Vermandois and Peronne, whose sway extended over the Soissonnais, who held in his hand the resources of the archbishopric of Reims, who commanded Chatillon and Château Thierry, could

control Laon, Meaux, and Troyes, and was almost supreme lord of all the country between the Somme, the Moyenne-Meuse, and the Marne, besides which, he was both brother and son-in-law of Robert. Charles, nevertheless, retook the field with a large army, and advanced upon Robert before he was prepared. In the great plain which extended between the city of Soissons and the château of St. Medard, the Franks were tranquilly refreshing themselves, when Charles, who had crossed the Aisne, came, with his hosts, upon them. Robert and his warriors defended themselves bravely; the aged chief seized the banner with his own hand, and spread out upon his mailed bosom his large white beard, in order that he might be recognised by his party. The banner of king Charles was borne by Count Fulbert, and towards him, in the midst of the carnage, Robert directed his course. He aimed a blow at the standard-bearer which must have been fatal, had not Charles who rushed to the spot exclaimed in a loud voice,—"Beware Fulbert—take heed to thyself!" Fulbert turned, and with a backward stroke cleft the skull of Count Robert, who fell dead at the feet of the king.

The death of his competitor did not secure the victory to Charles: the Franks, animated by Héribert and Hugues the son of Robert, renewed

the battle with greater ardour, and in the end remained masters of the field, after incredible carnage. Charles once more fled to Germany, but did not yet abandon his cause; he urged his revolted barons, and in particular the Count de Vermandois, to declare themselves for him, and was at length partially successful, for, contrary to the wishes of the haughty Héribert, a prince of Burgundy was proclaimed successor to Robert. Charles in an evil hour was induced to confide in the promises of Héribert and repaired to the *city of Vermandois*, then beginning to be called St. Quentin, but no sooner was he in the power of that treacherous noble than he found himself a prisoner. He was sent a captive to Château Thierry, and from that period till his death he became the mere plaything of Héribert, who paraded him from city to city with royal honours and with every mark of respect as long as it served his purpose, only to plunge him once more into confinement in some fortress, to be released again for a time when his tyrannical jailor required some concessions from Raoul, the new king. The Pope embraced the cause of the unfortunate Charles, but merely with a view of obliging Raoul to resign the county of Laon, which he having at length done in favour of Héribert, the latter determined no longer to appear to be the friend of

the betrayed monarch. Charles was forced to consent to abdicate in favour of Raoul, and a year after this act his sufferings were closed at Peronne in the dismal chamber in La Tour Herbert, which is now shown to the pitying traveller who recals to mind his sad fate, and sighs as he reflects on the "sad stories" which may be told "of the death of kings."

The bones of Charles were buried in the church of St. Furcy at Peronne, which no longer exists. The principal church is very fine, with palm-like pillars and roof, and some beautiful painted glass. The town is surrounded by marshes, and has been strongly defended; it is said never to have been taken, and to an inexperienced eye it would indeed appear impossible to be so: the fortifications, however, in case of another siege, such as that which it sustained in 1536 against the Comte de Nassau, would require much repair, which they seem in a fair way of receiving, as workmen are actively employed on the walls. In these towns the effect is very singular of all the buildings being beneath the level of the ramparts: this excludes a free circulation of air, and must render the streets close, and, one would imagine, unhealthy: as the backs of the houses are towards the promenade, its beauty is not increased, and as a higher wall closes them in on the side next the

country, the walks are sufficiently *triste*, though the wide extent of plain and marsh beyond does not offer a particular inducement to the stranger to make any efforts to look over the barrier.

We were accosted in our rambles by an old gentleman, who announced himself as a proprietor, —formerly in business, now living at his ease,— and he gave us a little information respecting the country, which he described as having become rich in productions within twenty years, though before that time it was a mere fen, extremely unhealthy and dangerous. The inhabitants of Peronne, he said, were rich, and possessed valuable lands; the air was healthy in summer, but on occasion of great rains agues were very frequent; nevertheless, he enumerated many of the inhabitants who had attained to an advanced age, and on the whole he did not consider that, of late years, the position of the town was fraught with danger to life. It must be a dismal spot in winter! Two leagues from Peronne are the remains of the ancient château d'Applincourt, where was proposed and signed 13th Feb. 1577, the criminal association, known as the Treaty of the League: and about five leagues off is the terrible castle of Ham, surrounded by its marshes, from whose gigantic tower so many prisoners of state have gazed despondingly over the wide extent of

plain which offered no means of escape. It was built in 1470 by Louis de Luxembourg, Count of St. Pol, who suffered death under Louis XI. Above the principal entrance is inscribed the motto, in Gothic characters, "Mon Mieux." There the ministers of Charles X. added their names to the melancholy roll of prisoners, and there Prince Polignac, born under a captive star, looked sadly from his grated window towards the unhealthy spot where he knew his young and interesting daughter, whose eyes he could not close, was dying of the pestilential air which breathed around, asking in feeble tones for her beloved father whose unfortunate fate had preyed upon her sensitive mind till the delicate frame sank under her regret and despair.

Prince Louis Napoleon now expiates in that mournful retreat his breach of honour and mad imprudence. Few travellers are allowed to approach the walls, and least of all the English, whom no explanations can exculpate in the minds of the French, always obstinate and unjust in their conclusions, from having encouraged the foolish attempt of the ill-advised young man who has badly exchanged his handsome house in Carlton Gardens for a damp and dreary abode like the horrible château of Ham.

The appearance of the country improves on

approaching St. Quentin from Peronne; the villages are remarkably clean and neat, and convey an idea of prosperity and industry. St. Quentin itself is a *ville champêtre*, uninclosed by walls or moats, and, after the sombre, guarded looking places we had passed through, greeted our sight with an aspect of gaiety and comfort peculiarly pleasing. It is built on the summit and slope of a hill of some extent, at the foot of which runs the Somme. The canal of Picardy surrounds a part of the town, where are walks planted with trees and offering promenades of the most agreeable and inviting description, laid out with much taste, and leading to fields of extreme beauty. We were delighted to roam about in this charming place, and extended our rambles to some distance through fields of rye and *colza* (rape), then all golden with its bright yellow flower, the perfume of which, on the breeze, is fresh and pleasant. A place called Bellevue, but a short walk along these pretty fields, is appropriated to Sunday fêtes, and is arranged with infinite neatness; the gardens, rich and luxuriant, and the shades very agreeable and soothing. Few towns in this part of France possess greater advantages in this particular than St. Quentin, and we were not surprised at the vociferous boasting of a loquacious attendant who did the honours of our

hotel, and who appeared resolved not to leave us during our stay in his town, which he considered superior to every other. Having unfortunately encouraged him at first in his descriptions, his eloquence knew no bounds, and scarcely could we obtain a hearing when we interrupted his rapturous accounts of the riches of St. Quentin and its neighbourhood, to entreat his offices,—for he proclaimed himself the *chef*,—to procure us some dinner. He had now another field for protestation, and left us with promises of an unique repast; it is but due to him to remark that he was true to his word.

Our zealous friend the *chef* would, however, scarcely permit us to enjoy a moment's quiet; for as soon as he conceived that we had sufficiently reflected on the perfection of his art, he made his reappearance with an excuse to demand our passport. This led to a discussion on the custom of asking for passports, which involved the expression of his opinion of the English, French, and every other government under the sun: at length, animated by his subject, he fairly seated himself on one of our trunks, and, in spite of cold looks and short answers, which he did not appear to observe, he entered into an *exposé* of the political conduct of all the rulers of Europe, in a strain which proved him equal to have taken the lead in any

popular tumult. His eyes flashed, and his singular countenance became almost fearfully animated; his words flowed without the slightest hesitation, he threw his arms about with violent gesticulation as he proclaimed, that if he had the offending parties, whom he anathematised as betrayers of the national honour of France, in the great square opposite our windows, he would be the first whose hand should seize the rope which should suspend them all "à la lanterne." "I speak," said he, "the sentiments of all France—we want no rich, we want no aristocracy—we are men and Frenchmen, and we adore our honour." Seeing his excitement, I begged him to change the subject, upon which suddenly he pulled off his white nightcap—the distinguishing crown of a *chef*—placed his hand on his heart, apologised for talking politics before ladies, begged us not to imagine that he was a *sanguinary* character, and with renewed offers to conduct us himself to see all the wonders of St. Quentin, disappeared, with a bow which would have graced a dancing academy.

We took the first opportunity of slipping out of the hotel unobserved by our persecutor, and concealing ourselves in the streets of his town, where, forgetting his disturbative eloquence, we sought the beautiful and quiet retreat of the cathedral, the elevated roof of which had long in-

vited us from the windows of our enormous, gloomy, singular looking apartment, which looked out into the fine square, considered the wonder of that part of the country. This square is of great extent, and surrounded by irregular built but good-looking houses; on one side is the antique Hôtel de Ville, quite a treasure of Gothic ornament. Its eight columns form a handsome arcade and gallery; their capitals are grotesque and curious, and the foliage of its cornices is exquisitely designed. The building is surmounted by a beautiful open tower, in which are contained the peal of bells of which the inhabitants are so proud, but whose incessant ringing out of tune every quarter of an hour, together with the accompaniment of those of every church far and near in emulation, make a *charivari* so intolerable that it is enough to drive the distracted traveller from the place in utter despair of obtaining rest night or day. It has become a custom to compare a talkative noisy person's voice to the *Carillon de St. Quentin*, and our enemy *the chef* might well have given rise to the saying.

The cathedral has no towers, but is nevertheless majestic and beautiful, and of a high style of art: there are no tombs, but a good deal of painted glass: the three windows in the choir are very fine and perfect, but many of the others

are patched: the roses of the cross are extremely vivid and elegant, though not large. Nothing can be lighter or more graceful than the groups of reedy pillars which support the body of the church; those round the choir are very massive and have Corinthian columns, appearing of a much earlier date than the rest. It is remarkably lofty, and an admirable harmony reigns throughout the whole building, which is of great extent.*

There are no other antique churches to be found, the town being almost entirely new, and convents and other religious edifices having been unhesitatingly swept away to make room for more modern structures. In laying out the Champs Elysées numerous *débris* were found of

* In the tapestry gallery, which is one of the most curious additions to the Louvre, may now be seen some singular pictures in needle-work, representing miracles connected with St. Quentin; probably, they formerly adorned the cathedral, as it was customary to hang tapestry round the choir. Beneath each scene are quaint verses; two of them are as follow:

Pour cueurs en dévotion mettre
Nottez ce miracle louable
D'ung larron lequel à ung Prestre
Robba son cheval en l'estable:

Ce prestre adverty du larron
Sent vint plaindre par mots exprès
Au prevost lors de St. Quentin
Qui ses gens envoia après, &c.

Roman and Gothic times, a few of which are preserved in the Court of the Bibliothèque, but very little attention is bestowed in this manufacturing town on antiquities, every thought being directed to the getting of money and the extension of trade. St. Quentin vies with Cambrai in its cottons and linens, and their preparation employs an immense number of workmen, of whom many are Scotch. We recognised a countrywoman at the door of a tailor's shop, surrounded by several meagre, sickly-looking children. She told us she was from Glasgow, when very young had married a Frenchman, and added, with a sigh, that she had now no chance of ever seeing Scotland again; she regretted that the air of the town injured her children's health, but she had no remedy for the evil, being established there and obliged to stay. We asked if her little boy spoke English? she replied, "No," and added, "The French say that the children have *an English face on them.*" The northern accent was not in the least degree impaired, though her language was a strange mixture of dialects. She was remarkably handsome, and still young, though married fourteen years, but had a sad, neglected, and discontented air, which made us melancholy to look at her and her evidently pining children, whom the fresh air of her native mountains

would probably restore to health. She had already, she said, buried several, and was about to be again confined.

We managed to effect our escape from St. Quentin at five in the morning, before our vociferous friend was stirring. We had not during our stay beheld a single female in the establishment, and on asking one of the clumsy garçons who attended us to send us the chamber-maid, he, with great naïveté, replied, "La fille—c'est moi."

We had heard from various persons of whom we had inquired, the most disparaging accounts of the town of Laon, to which we were bound, and began to feel half inclined to change our destination: having, however, observed that our opinion generally differed from that of others, and reflecting that manufactures were not altogether the object of our admiration, we trusted that the contempt expressed for the ancient and historically interesting city, once so great and powerful, might be ill-founded. We were confirmed in our resolve to adventure by hearing at last that there was no trade there, that the inhabitants had no spirit, that all the old walls and streets, and ramparts and churches, stood unmolested—that all was *morne et triste, et point de fabriques*. Our compagnon de voyage in the

*coupé*, an intelligent *fabricant*, added to this report, that the streets were dirty, the people idle and ignorant, and that there had been no new buildings for centuries: he protested that but from necessity he would never visit such a place, that it was dull enough to give any one the vapours, and that it was so steep that it was next to an impossibility to climb up from the plain, in the midst of which the mountain stood on which the ugly town was built. The word *mountain* revived us, fatigued as we had been with long-extending plains and never-ending marshes, and when our informant acknowledged that he had not been there for eleven years, we took courage again. We soon after lost him and took up a female, who appeared surprised at our questions as to whether Laon was supportable: her account was highly in its favour, and it had never seemed to enter her thought that her native town could be ill spoken of. Along many leagues of plain, and between hedges of honeysuckle and elder, did we travel in this alternation of hope and fear — the first vines had begun to appear,—when a sudden exclamation from our companion "Voilà Laon!" caused us to strain our eyes eagerly.

Rising like a gigantic shadow between the clouds, was seen on the horizon an elevation

crowned by towers, which was now visible, now eclipsed, as the road changed its direction or trees intervened.

Nearer and nearer we approached the object; and at length the walls and towers and turrets of beautiful and majestic Laon came out distinctly in the distance. We began to ascend the mountain, which, rising square and huge from the immense plain around, is terminated at its summit by this singular town, unlike any other in France, most inconveniently placed, except for purposes of defence, but picturesque and curious in the extreme. It took us, with additional horses, more than half an hour's toil before we found ourselves in the still ascending principal street, which, to our great relief, was open, wide, clean, and cheerful-looking. It was market-day, and all was life, bustle, and movement. Contrary to all our expectations founded on the accounts we had heard, in the principal square we heard the noise of workmen and saw the ground strewn with blocks of stone for the continuation of the construction of a new Hôtel de Ville in a forward state and remarkably handsome; and we stopped at the respectable Hôtel de la Hure, in good spirits and full of expectation, for some of the most beautiful towers we had ever beheld had struck us as we drove up the ascent.

## CHAPTER III.

Laon.—Walk to St. Vincent.—Les Creuttes.—Tour de Louis d'Outremer.—Ganelon.—Vines of Laon.—Bêtes of Breuil.—Cathedral.—St. Martin.—The beautiful Abbess.—The tall Tyrant.—Eve's Tower.—Place of Pilgrimage.—Fame of a Virgin.

THE department of Aisne, in which the town of Laon is situated, is formed of the Soissonnais, the Laonnais, the Tardenais, the Vermandois and the Thiériache, small territories once of great importance, now comprised in southern Picardy; it also claims a portion of Valois belonging to the Île de France and of la Brie Champenoise. Aisne was in the fourteenth century the scene of fierce and obstinate combats between the chivalry of England and France, and not a town or castle but felt the effects of the long contentions which desolated the country throughout its extent. Nature seems to have divided this department into two distinct parts: one a boundless plain, the other covered with chains of high hills of varied aspect.

The mountain of Laon is one of the most remarkable of these, from its isolated position in

the midst of the vast plain which surrounds it. Luxuriant vines cover the ground to the very walls of the town; these, at the time we arrived, were in bloom, and their perfume on the air was delicious. Here and there, fields of vetches of a rich deep rose-colour, and the light rye waving with every breath, gave life and animation to the scene, illumined by a warm and brilliant sun. Nothing can be conceived more beautiful than the walk we took, early in the morning after our arrival, round part of the ramparts beneath the avenues which lead towards the ancient abbey of St. Vincent, whose ruins crown an opposite elevation on the same plateau, which is beautifully broken by rich and cultivated ravines, the most important being called La Cuve de St. Vincent, which forms a kind of port. Every here and there an opening in the thick shades disclosed a magnificent and extensive view over the fertile country; and as we advanced, the four delicate towers of the superb cathedral appeared above the rest of the buildings, as the windings of the way now revealed and now shrouded them from view. A chorus of birds was welcoming the lovely spring, which promised so much happiness; acacias just in bloom shook their clusters over our heads; orchards of cherries and apples, in full blossom, were beneath us. After quitting the

broad rampart, we followed a delicious path that brought us to a grove of flowering trees, which we entered and found ourselves amidst the fresh green leaves of the walnut, the snowy and luxuriant alder, the twining wild rose, and innumerable buds of every shape and hue; on one side were banks covered with violet roots, whose flowers, now passed, must indeed have "taken the winds of March with beauty." Beneath the apple trees was spread a golden carpet of king-cups, and between the soft green vines sprang up lines of fragrant beans. The thrushes warbled loud and sweetly, and the cuckoo kept up an unceasing call as we walked on, almost in a state of enchantment, along the beautiful *chemin des creuttes.*

We soon found that we had reached an embattled wall which extended for an immense distance beside us; and we began to form some idea of the stupendous strength and enormous extent of the fortified abbey, once the pride and terror of the Laonnais. We traced the deep moat between the luxuriant vegetation and the overhanging trees, and rested occasionally on blocks of marble and granite, which had formed part of the building, and now, overgrown with flowers, lay scattered in the path. We came at last to two huge round towers,—the same which from the neigh-

bouring heights of Laon had attracted us to the spot,—and found that they formed the entrance lodges to a beautiful garden and modern house, the property of a gentleman of the vicinity, who made this his summer residence. Of all the grand and gorgeous abbey, of its forts and bastions, and towers and cells, and cloisters and spires, nothing remains but *les creuttes, i. e.* the walls which, extensive as they are, only enclosed the convent gardens. A few towers, at distances along the old and now newly restored wall, indicate the form of part of the building. The situation is exquisite; at every twenty steps new prospects open, new beauties rise; and a whole day might well glide away amongst the shades of St. Vincent,—lonely yet cheerful,—"a populous solitude of bees and birds."

From the hill of St. Vincent the view of Laon is extremely fine: its spires, dômes, and battlements, the towers of its religious edifices still powerful through the wrecks of ages, its venerable groves and picturesquely grouped buildings, all come clearly out in the distance, and strike the beholder with awe and veneration. La Grosse Tour de Louis d'Outremer, once the wonder of centuries, has, alas! lately fallen to give place to a new *citadelle* which is intended to protect the town *from Russian invasion*. Numerous work-

men are carrying on their destructive operations, and a whole grove of Druidical trees have been felled for the modern defences considered necessary. When we saw this, and climbed with difficulty amongst the ruins and rubbish of the demolished tower, and discovered a party of men busy in making bricks on the spot, we were seized with indignation and ready to weep with regret for the loss of so stupendous a monument of antique grandeur. One of the townspeople, observing our annoyance, encouraged its expression, and began to lament the destruction of all their antiquities. "We are being daily deprived of everything we prize," said he; "there are to be new fortifications all round the old ramparts, and our beautiful trees are to be cut down without mercy!" We found, however, to our great satisfaction afterwards, that no such intention exists on the part of government; the devoted Grosse Tour is alone to be sacrificed; the barbarians are to be terrified on this side only, and all the treasures of beauty and antiquity which surround Laon are to remain undisturbed. Walls of twenty feet thickness nevertheless still defy the efforts of these modern improvers, as they did, in the year 1794, the rage of revolutionists; and the base of the great tower, the postern door, and some of the windows, firm

as the rock itself on which it was built, laugh at all futile efforts to level them with the earth.

As is usual with most ancient towns, Laon asserts its antiquity *à toute outrance*. Its proper history begins with the period when Christianity was first known to the inhabitants; and the *Grotte de Chevrisson*, which till lately could be seen in the ancient citadel, attested the fact of the two holy recluses, St. Fortin and St. Beat, having chosen this mountain for their retreat, from whence they issued to perform their pious mission; and about the close of the third century, the first church of Laon was established.

There is no want of fables, both monastic and romantic, attached to the town and neighbourhood of Laon. One tradition of condign vengeance I felt sorry to be obliged to give up, but I fear it cannot be supported on good grounds. It is asserted that Ganelon, the traitor who betrayed the army of Charlemagne at Roncesvalles, was cited to appear before the injured monarch at Laon. Thierri l'Ardennais was the accuser: Piradel, a relation of the accused, undertook his defence. The cause was tried *en champ clos*, and the victory rested with Thierri. Piradel then not only confessed the treason, but acknowledged himself an accomplice. He was condemned to be hanged, and Ganelon to suffer the

fearful punishment, then in use, of being torn by wild horses. This sentence was said to be executed in a square of the faubourg de Leuilly, where the combat took place; and this part is still called *le champ de la bataille.* In the seventeenth century were still to be seen pillars of ten feet high at the four corners of the square. Unfortunately the whole story of Ganelon and the Moorish king, Marsilio, their interview in the gardens of the latter, when the treason was planned, and their punishment, all belong to the charming romances of the thirteenth century, rather than to historical fact; for Eginhard, the secretary to Charlemagne, mentions not a syllable of the matter! Other historians, immemorial tradition, and even certain monuments,* may be brought forward to prove the truth of the legend, which runs as follows:

* The church of Leuilly was said to have been built in commemoration of the judgment rendered by Charlemagne. Certainly this monarch is represented on a wall of the nave, armed at all points, and holding in his hand a model of the church. An inscription also declares him to have been the founder; but the characters in which it is written are not of very great antiquity, and the building itself could scarcely ever have been worthy of so illustrious an origin.

BRANCH OF THE STATE

## THE TREACHERY OF GANELON.

A LEGEND OF CHARLEMAGNE.

"Valencia! can the wide world show
Aught to exceed thy beauty's pride!
Valencia! but thy charms to know
Is to forego the world beside!*

When mighty Soleyman ascended†
In magic pomp the yielding sky,
By all his gorgeous train attended,
And by his feathered panoply,

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* Here are the strongest silks, the sweetest wine, the excellentent'st almonds, the best oyls, and beautifull'st females of all Spain. The very bruit animals make themselves beds of rosemary and other fragrant flowers hereabouts; and when one is at sea, if the winde blow from the shore he may smell this soyl, before he come in sight of it, many leagues off by the strong odoriferous scent it casts. As it is the most pleasant, so it is also the temperat'st climate of all Spain; and they commonly call it the second Italy, which made the Moors, whereof many thousands were disterr'd and banished hence to Barbary, to think Paradise was in that part of the heavens which hung over this citie.—HOWELL'S *Letters*.

† The Eastern writers say Solomon travelled thus: he had a carpet of green silk, on which his throne was placed; it was of prodigious length and breadth, and sufficient for all his forces to stand on, the men on his right, and the spirits on his left hand; and when all were in order, the wind at his command took up the carpet and transported it with all that were upon it wherever he pleased, the army of birds at the same time flying over their heads, and forming a kind of canopy to shade them from the sun.—SALE, *Prelim. Dis.*

He looked upon the earth beneath,
And saw no land so fair as thine,
And felt thy pure and perfumed breath
Rise rich with incense all divine.

Valencia! not al Jannat's bowers,
Her streams of molten gems, her flowers,
Her meads where blessed beings rove,
Where houris, with their eyes of love,
Look from their pearly caverns, bright
With circling rays of living light,—
Not all that Paradise bestows
Can be more pure, more heavenly fair,
And earth—oh earth no region knows
That may in aught with thee compare!

Within Valencia's ancient halls
The minstrel's lay of praise is sweet,
Her aged king his youth recals,
Some welcome, honoured guest to greet.
His years, his cares forgot awhile,
Around him wakes the ready smile,
Obedient to his regal word,
All join the pleasure of their lord;
For when a moharch's soul is glad
No rebel heart shall dare be sad!
What peer is he, what chief of fame,
Of courage proved, of mighty name,
The first in valour as in place,
Whom thus the monarch loves to grace?
On high behest from Charlemagne
Who seeks the court of Moorish Spain?
Perchance Montalban's knight is he,*
Or one amongst the gallant three,

* Rinaldo of Montalban, eldest of the four sons of Aymon, of chivalrous memory.—*See Bibliothèque Bleue, &c.*

Whom Aymon proudly calls his son,
Renowned for arms and battles won?
Or Ogier from the fairy's bower*
Redeem'd by spells of stronger power,
Or Durandarte, he whose arms
Made deathless bright Belerma's charms,
Or he whose name all realms revere,
Orlando, of all knights the peer?

No,—though from Babylon in haste†
Across the seas Orlando passed.

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* Ogier le Danois was two hundred years in the enchanted regions of the fairy Morgana, who retained him by means of a golden wreath which she had placed on his head. This one day falling into a fountain, he recovers his memory, and wishes to return to Charlemagne's court. He astonishes every one at the court of Hugues Capet on his arrival, by asking news of his friends. The year passed, during which Morgana in vain strove to regain the coronet; but she at length succeeds in recovering it and her lover together, who returns to her, and remains in her realm eternally.—*Romance of Ogier.*

† Gano, or Ganelon of Maganza, was a favourite of Charlemagne, who was quite ruled by him, and his sway caused great dissatisfaction in the court. Orlando and several other knights, unable to endure his insolence, banished themselves from France in disgust. Gano, however, having fallen into one of his own snares of treachery, is taken prisoner by certain giants, and *being a knight,* Orlando and his friends return from Babylon to rescue him, though they know him to be a villain and traitor. Gano, after his release, plots against his credulous master, and persuades Charlemagne to send him ambassador to king Marsilius of Spain. The old king, after a banquet given to him as ambassador, takes him alone to a fountain shaded with trees. There they sit and talk of old times, of Charlemagne when a young man having taken shelter in Spain under the name of

And though Rinaldo at his word
Has drawn in aid his conqu'ring sword,
It was to rescue from despair
One little worth their valorous care;
It was from slavery and woe
To save their own, their country's foe,
To free Maganza's wily son,—
The subtle traitor Ganelon!
'Tis he whom Charles once more believed,
More fatally to be deceived,
And lightly trusts his kingdom's weal
To him, an oft detected foe,
Whose soul those deadly frauds conceal
That wrought fair France's overthrow.

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Mainetto, where he was treated by Marsilius as a son, and of his waging war three times, wishing to deprive him of his crown, and give it to his nephew Orlando. While the king spoke, Gano watched the changes of his countenance in the water, trying to discover his real meaning. Marsilius observed this, and at length opened his mind to him, saying, if he would deliver him of Orlando, he should no longer fear Charlemagne. Gano in return made known to him his inveterate hatred to Orlando, Olivier, and the other paladins, and proposed to ensnare them, with the flower of the French army, in the narrow defiles of Roncesvalles, there to be cut to pieces by the Saracens. At the moment the traitorous compact was closed, wonders appeared in the heavens; thunder rolled and burst near the spot, the water of the spring boiled up and became tinged with blood, and a carob tree which overhung it, the same species as that on which Judas hung himself, sweated blood, and dried up suddenly, its leaves and bark falling to the ground.

Marsilius was afterwards hung on that very carob tree, and Ganelon suffered a horrible punishment, being torn to pieces by wild horses; but the ruin they contemplated was complete.—PULCI, *Morgante Maggiore.*

Dark Roncesvalles long shall tell
How all her matchless heroes fell,
And Fontarabia's echoes groan
With chivalry's expiring tone!

The feast, the revelry is o'er,
And in yon garden's secret bower
The king his willing guest has led
Where the tall carob's branches spread
Their shade on the fountain's waters bright
That struggle to catch the clear moonlight,
And throw their arms of feathery spray
High amidst its dancing ray.
The rich magnolia's snowy bloom
Fills the air with soft perfume,
The orange glows its leaves between
Shining thro' their deepen'd green,
And the golden flowers of the aloe close,
And hang their heads in sweet repose,
Like beauty when she veils awhile
The conscious glory of her smile.

"'Twas here," Marsilio said, "tho' now
Years have stamp'd furrows on my brow,
Tho' various since has been our lot,
And all our friendship is forgot,—
'Twas here great Charlemagne when fate
Smiled not as she has smiled of late,
By foes pursued, by friends betrayed,
Found shelter in this secret shade.

He loved me and was formed for love,
And spoke the words of loyal truth;
'Tis given maturer age to prove
A traitor to the vows of youth!
And oh! how dear he was to me!
How like a dream he seemed to be

Of all that minstrel e'er has told
Of gentle, generous, and bold.
But when he left my fost'ring care,
His friendship melted all to air,
And mighty Charles could soon forget
The welcome feign'd Mainetto met!
But not to him the change I owe,
Tho' thrice to desolate my land
He comes in arms, a dreadful foe—
And who his warriors may withstand!
No, not to him;—another leads
And urges on the warlike throng,
Through whom my suffering kingdom bleeds,
To whom I owe the deadly wrong.
Though now his words with peace are rife,
I hear them but as words of strife;
Though friendly are the terms you bear,
From him no peace my land shall know
Until the diadem I wear
Shall sparkle on Orlando's brow!"

While thus the monarch spoke and mused
An angry flush his cheek suffused:
Meanwhile the cautious traitor sat,
Nor seemed to mark his troubled mien;
But well he read the page of hate
That on the Moslem's brow was seen.
For now, as wearied with their play,
In placid calm the waters lay,
And in the fountain's ample breast,
Lit by the moonbeams, slept at rest.
Within, as on a mirror's face,
The monarch's features he could trace.
And still he gazed, while loud and long
Marsilio spoke and urged his wrong;

And ever and anon, as though
His words unwittingly were spoke,
The traitor's accents, soft and low,
New tempests of his ire awoke;
Till, from his arts no thought conceal'd,
The bold deceiver stood reveal'd.

Then was that deadly compact made
Which all that gallant host betrayed,
And seal'd the name of Ganelon
Deceit and treachery in one!

The recreant swore upon the rood,
Whose semblance graced his falchion's hilt,
That all the best and noblest blood
Of Christendom should soon be spilt,
And not a single foe remain
To check the tow'ring pride of Spain.

The Moslem by the Prophet's tomb,
By Aden's bowers of endless bloom,
By Ali's soul, by Allah's throne,
And by the Caaba's sacred stone,*
To grant what mead the wretch might claim
As guerdon of eternal shame.

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* The temple of Mecca was a place of worship and singular veneration with the Arabs from great antiquity, and many centuries before Mohammed. Though it was most probably dedicated at first to an idolatrous use, yet the Mohammedans are persuaded that the Caaba is almost coeval with the world; for they say that Adam after his expulsion from Paradise begged of God that he might erect a building like that he had seen there, called Beit al Mâmûr, or the Frequented House, and al Dorâh, to which he might direct his prayers, and which he might compass as the angels did the celestial one. Whereupon God let him down a representation of that house in curtains of light,

Scarce ended was th' accursed oath,
When sudden horror seized on both;
With pallid fear they stood amazed,
And on the scene before them gazed.
The fountain rose with rushing sound,
And dashed its struggling waters round,
Whose tint of pure and liquid blue
Was changed to dark and blood-red hue;
The moon shot forth a lurid light,
Which gleamed along the face of night,
While tempest clouds across her path
Seemed big with heaven's avenging wrath.

Loud peals of thunder shake the sky,
And all Valencia's hills reply;
The lightning's tongues of livid fire
Dart forth to join th' awakened ire,
And with wild impulse onward driven,
The carob's trunk its blast has riven,
Has scorched its leaves, its bark has rent
To earth its blackened branches sent;
Whose drops of bloody sweat distain
The shuddering earth with crimson rain.
So look'd, so shrank the tree of yore
Whose boughs accursed Judas bore!

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and set it in Mecca, perpendicularly under its original; (some say it was the real one, taken up to Heaven again at the flood.) In the south-east corner of the Caaba, being that which looks towards Basra, is the celebrated black stone, set in silver, about two cubits and one-third. This stone is kissed by pilgrims with great devotion, and by some called the right hand of God on earth. They say it was at first whiter than milk, but is rendered black by the touches and kisses of the faithful.—SALE's *Koran, Prelim. Dis.*

The guilty pair with terror fly,
  By fear and not remorse impell'd,
Unchang'd their schemes of treachery
  By heavenly vengeance, still withheld,
That deign'd a warning sign to give,
Bade them in time repent and live,
Or work their evil ways, and die
In tortures and in infamy.

Yon blasted carob yet retains
  Strength for thy weight, revengeful Moor,
Thy limbs shall fester in their chains,
  Till the last spark of life be o'er.
And thou, vile Ganelon! a fate
More hideous shall thy crime await;
Though poor amends thy pangs may be
For chivalry destroyed by thee!

The town was formerly divided into three parts. The first comprised, under the name of la Cité, all the buildings surrounding the citadel. The second was called Le Bourg, and extended from la Grosse Tour to the Abbey of St. Martin. Of the third, called La Vellette, the Creuttes de St. Vincent is all that remains. The mountain itself is of very irregular form, it is narrowed about the centre almost to a neck of land, and the plain advances upon it as though it were the ocean encroaching on a line of cliffs, thus forming a vast basin like a port. The two abbeys of St. Vincent and St. Jean, placed on the right and left of this entrance, appear to have defended it.

Six faubourgs are clustered at the foot of the mountain, and have a very pleasing effect; the spires of their parish churches appearing above the trees in which they are embosomed. All these were formerly of importance, and most of them have still some interest attached to them independently of their beauty of position, amongst the vines and orchards which adorn the country.

The vines of Laon are said to be the most ancient in France: they were also, in old times, the most esteemed: at the coronation of Charles IX. wines of the Rémois and Laonnois were presented to him, the latter being much the more expensive. If Champagne was then looked upon as the inferior, it has well revenged itself in later days.

Amongst the holy personages who flourished at Laon, in the 7th century, was a hermit who chose his retreat in the solitary wood of Breuil, then infested by frightful animals who devoured all those who ventured near their haunts. The inspired hermit, however, undismayed by all the catastrophes which were constantly occurring, resolved on fixing himself at the very entrance of their caverns, and succeeded in accomplishing by prayer what mortal force had failed to effect. The animals were exterminated, and in memory of this happy event, on the first day of Rogation week, the clergy of the town of Laon went for-

merly in procession round the wood of Breuil, preceded by three grotesque figures called by the people *la Papoire*, le Crocodile, and le Dragon. It is singular how many miracles of this sort were performed in early times: at some of the principal towns in Flanders; St. Quentin, and even Nevers, besides others in the South, the same ceremonies kept in remembrance the wonderful circumstances: these processions in the month of May, common to Pagan nations, may probably be intended to celebrate the return of Spring, and the triumph of the Sun over the season of fogs and frosts.

The Cathedral of Nôtre Dame de Laon is one of the most interesting and unique in France: many may be more perfect and finer in parts, but it is impossible that any can be more stupendous or offer details of greater beauty and delicacy as well as boldness and solidity. Its date is of the 12th century, but it has been built at different epochs, and its architecture is various, but all of the first order. The height of its fine roof, the grace of its apparently innumerable pillars, the two lines of columns with their beautiful capitals, twelve in the nave and eleven in the choir, the singular screens of its chapels with their fine decorations, a work due to the munificence of the Cardinal de Bourbon, all excite the greatest admiration, and compensate in a great

degree for the loss of all the tombs which once adorned the walls. There is a good deal of fine painted glass in the choir which terminates *square*, unlike most other churches. The great rose window is magnificent, both as to colour and shape: the stone-work is as fine as the painting. Its form is a circle surrounded by satellites of smaller circles, each containing a separate subject, and fortunately all perfect. The principal portal is very fine, and is approached by a high flight of steps: the twisted pillars which support it are singularly fine. The exterior is very grand, the four towers are unique in their beauty; solid and square in their mass, they are composed of a series of the most exquisitely delicate pillars, connected and crowned by a rich cornice. A winding transparent stair of ornamented stone runs through the centre to the top—grotesque figures of animals peep forth from transparent niches at an immense height: the blue sky shines through the numerous openings, defining the forms of the pillars, and their light rich capitals. Seen in all directions, these towers are objects of remarkable beauty, and, looking at them from a distance, the mixture of lightness and stability which they present is surprising in the extreme.

The extent of the building, like all those at Laon, must have been immense, for though so

much has been swept away the remains are still very great; the cloisters are almost all gone, which are said to have been treasures of art; a gallery remains on one side of the square of the Palais de Justice, adjoining the Abbey, which presents features of great interest; the massive pillars sunk deep in the ground, and their severe and simple capitals are of extreme antiquity; they contrast well with the parterres of light spring flowers and bushes of yellow roses, which adorn the square and surround the deep large well in the centre.

The next object of admiration in Laon is the church of St. Martin, at the opposite extremity of the town; it is, however, more imposing by its two fine towers which divide the view with those of Nôtre Dame, than for what is to be found now in the interior. Two beautiful statues rescued from the wreck of revolutionary violence are placed on the floor near the grand entrance. They are of white marble and of fine execution: one represents an abbess, the face, hands, drapery, all of extreme beauty, and quite uninjured: her pastoral staff is ornamented with tabernacle work like the finest lace, and the lions at her feet are admirably executed. The other statue is that of a knight in chain armour with sword and belt, elaborately and exquisitely carved, and a trian-

gular shield with the bearings quite clear: who these personages were, is at present unknown; nor has it been ascertained in what church their tombs were originally placed.

It may be forgiven to the imagination, to suppose that the statue of the beautiful abbess might represent the unfortunate Judith, queen of the ill-fated Louis le Débonnaire, whose name answers so little to his fortunes. He had, like Lear, divided his possessions amongst his three sons, Lothaire, Pepin, and Louis; but having afterwards married, and another son being born to him, he considered it but justice that the last should also be provided for, and reclaimed a portion from each to give to their younger brother. A secret league was formed against him by his unnatural children, whose designs were soon but too apparent. They declared their enmity openly, and appeared at the head of numerous armies demanding the restitution of their domains. The emperor, taken by surprise, was chiefly anxious for the safety of his wife, the principal object of their hatred, and by his direction she immediately sought refuge in the Abbey of Nôtre Dame, at Laon. Pepin, discovering where she was concealed, hastened to despatch thither a strong body of troops, commanded by two of his lieutenants. He followed himself with the rest of

his army, determined to besiege the town if it offered the slightest resistance to his will. None, however, was made, the gates were opened to him at the first summons. Judith was dragged from the altar of the church with violence, conducted to the camp of Pepin, and forced to take the veil. Her unhappy husband fell into the hands of his enemies, and the same scene of violence took place in the Abbey of St. Medard de Soissons, which monastery they forced him to enter.

Whether the knight represents the son-in-law of Louis le Débonnaire I do not venture to assert, and, indeed, the manner in which he met his death at Laon, might have deprived him of the honour of so fine a tomb as this effigy must have belonged to. Begon, Count of Paris, was of exalted stature: one day as he was entering a church at Reims, he struck his head violently against the top of the door, and flew in consequence into such a passion, that he commanded the church to be destroyed. The order was executed at the time when he came to visit his father-in-law at Laon. His punishment soon followed his crime, for the devil took possession of him immediately on his arrival, and tormented him in so dreadful a manner, that it was long before the prayers of the royal family, and a vow

he was induced to make to re-establish the destroyed church, procured his deliverance.

The most remarkable of the numerous towers which surround the town of Laon is one near the Porte St. Martin, and not far from that which is called La Tour d'Herbert. The peculiarity of this is that it leans in the same manner as the celebrated towers of Pisa and Bologna, and is said to be the only one of the kind in France. The upper part is destroyed, but the inclination is easily perceived in what remains. It is called, for some reason which has never been explained, *La Tour de la Dame Eve.* Another, on the descent, is called *De Brunehaut,* built by that famous queen, who resided for some time at Laon, and founded the Abbey of St. Vincent,

Our hotel of La Hure was one of the most ancient houses at Laon, but so many new apartments had been built over the old ones, so much had been cleared away, painted, papered, and repaired, that it presented few features of antiquity. Everything was clean, though there was the usual appearance of slovenliness that is met with even at the best towns abroad, and the customary mixture of fashion and want of necessaries. For instance, our rooms were neatly and tolerably furnished, and were newly arranged, but they looked out into a dirty stable-yard and court,

noisy, and anything but picturesque: there was no better view from any part of the house, but many of the rooms had much worse, so we were obliged to be content. Our pretty waiting-maid, Hyacinthe, had the finest black eyes imaginable, and glossy long black hair, dressed with the greatest care and elegance, though the rest of her dress was not remarkable: her assistant was a fair girl, called Ismerie, whose name we remarked as singular, and when we were told that she was named after the Princess Ismerie, we requested to know who that lady might be. "Is it possible," was the reply, "that you do not know the shrine of our blessed Lady of Liessè, and have not seen the statue of the Princess Ismerie in the church?" We confessed our ignorance, and were soon informed, that about four leagues from Laon was situated this famous shrine, frequented now, as formerly, by devout pilgrims, who come long journeys on foot to visit it. Three thousand at least had paid their respects this year, and more would arrive before the summer was past. Some women have been known to come from a distance of sixty leagues, scantily clothed, with naked feet and dishevelled hair. The sick and maimed are brought in carts and litters, and never fail to derive benefit from the holy presence.

This appeared so like a fable at the present day,

that we had no doubt our simple damsels were either deceived by report, or wished to deceive us. We, however, made particular inquiries in other quarters, and found that the fame of the miraculous Virgin of Liesse stood as high as it could possibly have done at the time when it was by a miracle brought from the Holy Land. To satisfy ourselves and our hostess, who assured us that we should have a charming drive over a good road to a delightful village in the plain, and be infinitely gratified by the sight of a beautiful church and agreeable country, we ordered a small open carriage provided with a hood, for the weather was unusually warm and bright, and set out on a pilgrimage to Nôtre Dame de Liesse.

## CHAPTER IV.

Arrival at N. Dame de Liesse. — A picture of the dark ages of Superstition.—Pretty Hostesses of the Sacred Sign.—Holy Bottle.—Legend.—The Soldan's Daughter.—Miraculous help to the unskilful.—Fountain.—Broad hint.—Why Black?—Pious Pilgrims.

ALONG a hot dusty level road we proceeded, expecting presently to arrive at some turn where the promised beauties were to meet our eyes, but still we followed an uninterrupted course of corn-fields, with scarcely a bush or tree to afford us a temporary shade. Somewhat disconcerted, we at last turned off into a cross road, and for some time skirted a pretty wood of Samoussy, and thought that new scenery would burst upon us; a change certainly took place, but for the worse, the road was as bad as possible, and we soon discovered that our vehicle was by no means calculated to travel on one so rugged and difficult. After jolting a good while, we at length approached a few shabby, dirty, slovenly-looking houses, and, to our dismay, were informed that

our goal was reached. Our driver conducted his carriage through a narrow porch up a stony lane to a little cabaret, where he stopped at the *sign* of the Blessed Virgin of Liesse; and here he recommended us to dismount, telling us that exactly opposite the end of this court we should find what we sought. We mechanically obeyed his directions, and presently stood before a small, low, insignificant-looking church, with the defaced remains of an ancient portal and window half blocked up: everything besides was new and mean, answering in all respects to the wretched village in the midst of which it rose. In the porch of entrance sat groups of squalid-looking beggars with baskets of toys, which they clamorously offered for sale as we approached.

The inside of the church was as uninteresting as the outside. The altar of the Black Virgin is covered with tinsel and faded flowers and ends of old ribbons, little candles and models of limbs hung here and there; crutches, sticks, and other instruments, left behind by those whose cure had been effected, altogether made as strange and disagreeable a figure as could well be seen. The walls were covered with remarkably bad pictures, and statues, ill-executed, of three knights and a lady in an Eastern costume, were placed

under the arches of the pillars; each of these had their names inscribed under them, and were, it appeared, the Chevalier d'Eppe, the Chevalier de Marchais, the Chevalier de Coucy, and the female in the turban and trousers was no other than the renowned Princess Ismerie herself, who bore a strong resemblance to the "Fair Sophia," immortalised by Cruikshank. A pamphlet, which we bought on the spot, set forth the history of this famous party, which is singular as illustrating the force of credulity and superstition, although the most extraordinary part of the circumstance is that, at the present day, anything so monstrous should be received as true, and that pilgrimages should actually be made, (for we found nothing had been exaggerated to us,) and homage paid to such a shrine.

As we left the church we observed a crowd collected round a cart, out of which a wretched, sick, lame man was being taken to be placed before the altar of the Virgin. Close by, as a sign that holy toys were made at the shop beneath, hung, dangling in the wind from a pole, a large rosary at least five or six feet long, and as we proceeded along the mean narrow street we found that in every house the same merchandise was sold and being prepared. Men, women, and children were all busy turning, ham-

mering, grinding, polishing, weaving, and dressing dolls; every window was crowded with medals, rings, crosses, rosaries, pictures, artificial flowers of coloured paper, images, and bottles of water, said to have been drawn from the holy well close by, filled with all sorts of strange little coloured glass figures, representing sacred personages and symbols of the crucifixion, suspended by globules of glass at different heights in the water. A more perfect picture of the most consummate ignorance and superstition it was impossible to behold, and we were almost inclined to rub our eyes and ask if we were awake or dreaming of a scene of the dark ages of priestcraft. But no, there was a whole town, every individual in which was employed in the fabrication of trumpery unworthy of the notice of a savage, or only fitted to attract such gazers. We continued our way, invited at every step to purchase some of these objects, whose immense profusion actually dazzled our eyes; the sun was burning, the long winding street was stony, no shelter offered itself, when we saw at a distance a few trees, towards which we hastened. These trees afforded a scanty shade to a small building fitted up as a chapel, where on an altar stood another Black Virgin covered with the usual glittering trumpery; the avenue to this was crowded

by *devout* beggars exhibiting their wounds and accidents in a disgusting manner as they sat round the miraculous well in honour of which the chapel was erected. We were soon driven away by the clamour of these people, and looked round for a walk or nook where we might rest from the heat and dust, in vain!

We were obliged to return to our cabaret, and there we rejoiced to seat ourselves in the cool brick parlour at a table, where two very pretty young girls, who had been eyeing us for some time with inquisitive glances, brought us some wine and water, and offered to show us some of their treasures; for here, as at every other house, they sold *des souvenirs saints* of N. D. de Liesse. Their *naïveté* and beauty, neatness and good-humour, restored our spirits, and we bought several of the toys they exhibited. A *holy bottle* could not be resisted—they opened the cases of several, and regretted that, their mamma being out, they could not set forth with sufficient eloquence the virtues and use of the articles we were favoured with. They seemed quite as much amused as we were in looking at and explaining the dancing contents of our bottle. "Voilà ce qu'il y a de bien drôle!" was their frequent exclamation, appropriate enough if the objects to which it was addressed had not re-

presented some of the most sacred mysteries of the Christian religion.

But it is worth while to mention the legend which has given rise to all this absurdity, one which might well have gained credence at the early period when it was first introduced, but how, in this age of common sense and universal instruction, it can be offered by the Romish Church to the belief of the vulgar, is a mystery and a miracle more wondrous than all that it records in the history of the Soldan's daughter.

Three brothers, of the noble family of Eppe, in Picardy, knights of St. Jean de Jerusalem, distinguished for their courage and piety, were taken prisoners by the Sarrasins at the beginning of the 12th century, and confined in a dungeon at Grand Cairo. The Soldan of Egypt, having heard of their great reputation, had a curiosity to see them, and caused them to be brought before him. The dignity of demeanour of the three brothers, their superior height, and commanding and handsome presence, impressed the unbeliever with admiration and surprise, and he immediately formed the project of converting them to the faith of Mahomet and gaining them over to serve his cause. Instead, however, of allowing his sentiments to be observed by them, he treated them with greater rigour than before, in order to reduce them to

despair and dispose their minds to accept the offers he intended to make. Accordingly, every species of cruelty and severity which could be imagined was heaped upon them; but they received their injuries, not only with patience, but rejoicing, happy to suffer for the glory of heaven.

As may well be imagined, the knights rejected with indignation the temptations thrown in their way; the Soldan then let loose upon them all the most learned doctors of the country, who expounded the mysteries of the Mahomedan religion to no effect, the superior reasonings of the Christian captives putting them to silence and confusion. The Soldan, driven to his wits' end, then conceived the notable project of sending his daughter, the Princess Ismerie,—young, beautiful, and of singular knowledge,—to endeavour to convert these obstinate unbelievers.

The Princess, by the command of her father, accordingly clothed herself in her richest attire, as for a festival, and repaired to the prison, to the no small astonishment of the knights, who were far from expecting the honour of such a visit. It seems that the fair Ismerie was gifted with extraordinary eloquence, and it would seem that she was also intimately acquainted with the French language, or else that the knights during their captivity had studied the language of the Egyp-

tians, for a great controversy took place between this *partie quarrée*. In spite of the Princess's arguments, the captives remained unconvinced of the superiority of the religion of Mahomet; and in the end, after attending to these conversations, the lady "felt in her heart sensations hitherto unknown to her."

By degrees, a sudden admiration sprang up in her mind of the character of *the Virgin Mary*, and she expressed an ardent desire to the knights to behold some representation of her, such as the Christians held in veneration.

Here was a great difficulty: neither picture nor statue did any of them possess which could give her an idea of the form she wished to see; neither of them were either sculptors or painters, but the Chevalier d'Eppe, the eldest brother, at last resolved to try his hand at carving something approaching to the holy figure. He requested the Princess to bring him a piece of wood and some implements necessary for his work, which she was condescending enough to promise, all the while cencealing from her father the fact of the little progress she had made in the conversion of the knights. When, however, the materials were in their hands, the captives felt themselves in a strange state of embarrassment. All the *bonne volonté* in the world cannot make an artist out of a

person totally ignorant of art, and they looked at the block of wood before them in despair. Raising their eyes to heaven, and seeking for aid in prayer, they implored the Blessed Mother to afford her assistance in bringing the Princess to a proper view of things, and even went so far as to suggest that an image should be constructed by hands unseen, in order to further so desirable a purpose.

In the midst of their prayers, they fell asleep in their dark and narrow dungeon, but what was their astonished delight on awaking to find a brilliant light in the chamber, and in the midst a figure of the Blessed Lady herself, fashioned without doubt by angelic hands.

The next time the Princess visited them, her amazement was extreme to find them so well provided with light, and when the celestial image was presented to her by the Chevalier d'Eppe, she had not another word to say, and, convinced by such a proof of divine interposition, became converted in an instant. Great was the joy of the knights, great was the delight of the Princess, and so content were they altogether, that they named the miraculous image Nôtre Dame de Liesse in memory of the happiness her presence diffused.

The Princess from this time could not separate herself from the wonderful image, which she begged to be allowed to carry off, promising to con-

ceal it carefully in her closet. This she did, and finding her father impatient to behold some fruits of the exhortations he believed his daughter to be constantly giving to the prisoners, she began to be alarmed, and bethought her of asking the advice of the holy companion so miraculously given her. She was in a short time favoured by a vision, in which the Virgin herself appeared to her, surrounded by a troop of holy maidens, and desired her to be of good cheer, for that she would instruct her how to proceed, in order to escape herself from the bondage of infidelity and rescue the knights who suffered for their faith.

Recovering from the ecstasy into which she had fallen, the Princess Ismerie resolved to attempt an escape without loss of time. It is mentioned in the legend, that at midnight she rose, took the miraculous image, "*and her jewels*," and sallied forth by a private stair from the palace. All the bolts and bars flew open as she approached the prison, and she found the knights in prayer, expecting her arrival. As no obstacle now barred their passage, they found no difficulty in leaving their disagreeable abode, and, travelling with all expedition, soon reached the banks of the Nile. There the party were favoured with a new proof of divine protection; for scarcely had they arrived on the shore when a young man

presented himself, with a vessel, and declared it to be at their disposal. As swiftly as if propelled by steam they reached the other side; but no sooner had they landed than their ferryman and his bark disappeared. The wanderers took the first path which presented itself, Ismerie always carrying in her arms the celestial image. Notwithstanding her zeal, however, the fair devotee began at length to feel fatigued, the knights, therefore, recommended her to take a little repose while they watched. She retired to repose in a meadow a little way out of the route, while her faithful guardians kept for some time a careful look out, lest the grim Soldan and his people should surprise them. Exhaustion however prevailed, and they all fell asleep on their post. Wondrously was the Chevalier d'Eppe amazed when, on opening his eyes, *after some hours' rest,* he found himself in a different country, and by degrees recognised his own Picardy and his château de Marchais not far off. He hastened to awake his companions, and inform them of their good fortune. Ismerie's first care was for the image, which she had laid at her side; she was agonised to find it no longer there, but seeking throughout the meadow she discovered her lost treasure by the side of a spring. This spring is the same still visited at the entrance

of the bourg de Liesse, near the Porte de Laon, where a chapel was afterwards erected in honour of the repose of the Virgin, and *from that time* it is known that fevers and many other maladies have been cured by the waters of the fountain. This is the water in which the little harlequin figures before-mentioned figure.

The lady mother of Eppe being informed by her sons of their royal companion's arrival, hastened to welcome her, but another miracle occurred on her way from the fountain to the château. As they passed a certain spot the image, which the Princess held in her arms, became too heavy for her to support, and, slipping from her, fixed itself so firmly on the ground that all their efforts were unavailing to move it. They then comprehended that the Virgin wished to receive in that spot the worship of the faithful, and engaged themselves by a vow to execute her desire, after which the figure became as light as before, and the Princess bore it off to the castle.

It seems that the holy joy and numerous acts of rejoicing of the whole neighbourhood, on the return of the knights, finished by causing the miraculous image some *ennui*, for it was one day found missing, and discovered again fixed on the

spot where it had chosen to remain stationary before. This second hint was enough, and the knights, recollecting their vow, applied to the bishop of Laon, by whom the Princess was baptised with great solemnity, and received the name of Marie.

In due time a fine church was erected by the care of the pious knights and their friends; the Princess dedicated herself to the service of heaven; the knights spent their time in holy works, and from that period to the present Nôtre Dame de Liesse has never ceased—allowing for a few *unavoidable* intervals—to perform the same kind of miracles as those believed to have taken place when her altar was first covered with an arbour of leaves in the meadow where she planted herself on her arrival from the land of the Paynim.

Considering that this image, as well as many others too numerous to mention, was fashioned by celestial hands, it is remarkable how little it answers to the commonly received opinion of beauty, for a more frightful deformed doll it is difficult to behold. There is scarcely a celebrated Virgin throughout France who is not represented as black, from what authority is unknown, unless the artist was guided by the verse

of Scripture, as has been supposed by some, which says, "I am *black* but comely, oh ye daughters of Jerusalem."

Louis XI., that amateur of black Virgins, had a peculiar devotion to Nôtre Dame de Liesse, and it was in this very church that he swore to keep the promises extorted from him by Charles the Bold at Peronne. It is true that he did not keep his oath, but he was probably absolved by N. D. de Clery, or d'Embrun, or whatever other *Dame de ses Pensées* held sway, as his convenience dictated.

Le "Bon Roi René" was a great patron of this church. Charles VI. made a pilgrimage to this shrine in order to be cured of his unfortunate malady, but it does not seem that the *image* was propitious. History has not recorded that it was from any interference of this particular Virgin in the affairs of Charles VII. that he owed the restoration of his crown, although he had not failed to invoke her aid. Francis I. came here to return thanks to his black protectress after his emancipation from a Spanish prison. Henry II. visited her shrine, but probably omitted to ask from her some spell against accidents. Charles IX. came here to implore her assistance against heresy, and perhaps took a few hints as to the best means of getting rid

of that scourge. His pious mother caused a good road to be made for the greater convenience of pilgrims, and came there in person. Louis XIII., who came here with his queen to pray for his son, greatly benefited the church and restored the sacristy; a grand procession was made from the cathedral of Laon to Liesse by all the magistrates and clergy of the diocese a *few days before the death* of that pious king, to entreat the Virgin to prolong his life. Pope Clement II. granted two plenary indulgences to those who entered into the *confrérie* of N. D. de Liesse; one in favour of the living, the other of the dead.

In the church may be read the following announcement, which does not require comment:

"Avantages du Chemin de la Croix.—A chaque station indulgence plenière; *mêmes indulgences que si l'on visitait les Saints Lieux de la Palestine.* On peut appliquer ces indulgences aux âmes du Purgatoire. Conditions.—Prier devant *chaque tableau;* finir par 6 pater et 6 ave."

Hermits were formerly in abundance in these parts, and our pretty hostesses informed us that there were several still living not far from the town. We, however, declined accompanying them to visit any of these holy men, having quite satisfied our curiosity at N. D. de Liesse.

## CHAPTER V.

Coucy.—Château de Coucy.—Romantic Town.—Round Tower.—The Lion of Coucy.—Prémontré.—The Poet of Coucy.—Enguerrand.—The Harness-maker.—Therèse, l'Ouvrière.—Storm.—Gabrielle.—The King's feet.—Coucy la Ville.—Moyenbrie.—Subterranean Village.—Rural Royalty.

We could not quit Laon without regret, but had great hopes of finding much interest at Coucy, the renown of whose castle, famous throughout centuries, and said to be magnificent in its ruin, had attracted us from afar. We therefore trusted ourselves to the guidance of an old gentleman *en blouse*, who conducted a rudely-formed diligence from Laon every day to the desired spot, seven leagues distant. As he carried the mail, we thought ourselves secure of an arrival, and accordingly took our places in his *patache* with one horse. The sun was as brilliant and scorching as on our last journey to the miraculous shrine, and we had some misgivings as to the possibility of the vehicle being somewhat warm; however, we had agreed to go, and could

not well draw back. Our driver, though he showed some symptoms of impatience at our indecision, vaunted the excellence of his horse, the quickness of the *trajet*, and the pleasantness of the road. We climbed into the machine, and were soon hid in the *fond*, which was our exclusive right. Scarcely, however, had we started than we began to repent. After rattling down the hill of Laon, we paused to take up more passengers, and then the real dispositions of both our driver and his horse showed themselves. He insisted on stuffing his carriage fuller than it would hold, and in spite of our remonstrances admitted several more persons than he had any right to do, accompanying his peremptory commands that we should *rester tranquille* with expletives by no means gentle.

As the heat of the day increased, the warmth of his temper seemed to keep pace with it; he flogged his horse, who snorted indignant resistance, without intermission; rattled, abused, and tyrannised over man and beast; drove over a drunken traveller, whom he had knocked down after half agreeing to add him to our overflowing car, where we sat as devoted victims, protesting against his cruelty and oppression, and finally becoming calmer as we neared the town, deposited us at the Pomme d'Or at Coucy. We had in one

stage of his fury declared our intention of getting out of his prison, and seating ourselves on our baggage by the road side, preferring to trust ourselves to the chance of a passing carriage to continuing under his arbitrary sway, but he had frightened us into submission; and as by good fortune he had taken up a gentleman whom we knew, whose property was in the neighbourhood, and who contrived to soothe his irritated feelings and reassure us, we bore our fate as well as we could.

Nothing could be more humble and obliging than this crazy-headed *conducteur* on our arrival; all his sound and fury had passed away; his occupation was o'er, and he subsided into civility. We were told that he was always in this state of excitement when driving, and as his life had been passed on the road from Laon to Coucy for thirty years, and he always brought the mail regularly, had never been overturned, was honest and *sober*, no one minded "his trumps and his frenzy." He rested at each of the towns which he honoured by his sojourn a few hours only, at evening and morning, and then was again *en route*. He had never done anything else, and considered himself monarch of the road. No grim baron of Coucy could show himself a greater tyrant, or keep his vassals in greater awe, than

did this personage, and we found that to complain of him was quite out of all *règle.*

Our journey, independently of the disturbative character of our driver, was very pleasant; the country was charming, rural, and pretty in the extreme, with occasional scenes of a bolder description, and here and there on an eminence the remains of an ancient château. Near the Château de Pignon we began to ascend a very high hill, and a second horse was brought from a stable by a young woman to be companion to our single one. Our driver then gave up all concern of his carriage to this damsel, who, having harnessed the great powerful creature, took the whip and marched by its side up the hill. About half way, however, the animal, who from long acquaintance with our strange driver seemed to have learnt his habits, suddenly asserted his right of free will, and turning round deliberately, began to descend, regardless of the exclamations of all parties. Our driver then came to the rescue, and loud and furious were his invectives against the assistant of his own imperturbable and apparently contemptuous beast.

The first sight of the Château de Coucy is extremely imposing. One high white round tower, crowned with a diadem of ornamented stone and a circle of small loopholes, rises alone above the

plain which seems to surround it. Sometimes it is lost amongst woods, or concealed by a hill, then it re-appears higher than before, so brilliant in colour, so perfect in shape, so clearly defined, and so correct in outline, that it was long before I could persuade myself that it had not been very recently restored. As we approached nearer, it appeared to me as if the blue sky shone through certain rents of ruin, but again its sharp crown cutting against the clouds puzzled me, and my conjectures and exclamations greatly amused our companion in captivity, whose enthusiasm for his native towers knew no bounds, and who delighted in pointing out every point of view in which they could be seen to the best advantage.

All the minor miseries that we had suffered on our way were amply compensated by our sojourn at Coucy, which is altogether one of the most interesting and charming spots it is possible to discover throughout the pleasant country of Valois.

The division of town called Coucy le Châtel or le Château, is beautifully situated on undulating ground, near a fine forest called La Forêt Basse; it is the most considerable part, and is called the higher town; the lower, termed Coucy la Ville, stands at a considerable distance, and is now no more than a dependent village. Coucy le Château is still surrounded in part by high walls,



CHATEAU DE COUCY

London Richard Bentley New Burlington Street 18

flanked by a great quantity of towers, once of extraordinary strength, and forming a fortress of formidable power. The town has still the remains of its three gates. That of Laon is very majestic: its enormous towers, on each side of the low arch of entrance, are covered in the most picturesque manner with a mantle of ivy and flowering parasites, which fall in verdant drapery about them; from these massive walls of stupendous thickness reach to other towers at distances as far as the eye can follow, and on the tops of some of these the inhabitants have planted delicious and luxuriant gardens, whose roses peep over the venerable parapets, and whose light trees wave amidst the ruins. Nothing can be more beautiful or more imposing than the aspect of the town from this side; its gigantic walls, fine towers, luxuriant vegetation, deep moats, ruined bridges, solemn shades, and flower-crowned battlements. An artist sees at every change of position some point which might engage his pencil, and with difficulty can he move away from one romantic spot to another, which for the time appears to him still more attractive. In the mean time he is detained from the principal object of attraction, the glorious and splendid castle itself, worthy to allure from every part of Europe the admirer of the picturesque and beautiful.

At the season when we were so happy as to visit this sequestered nook of France, everything combined to render Coucy all that a poet or a painter can desire and enjoy, and I cannot imagine any circumstances under which it would not appear to advantage. Even in gloomy or severe weather it has features which may accord with the time, it has recollections, grave and gay, which render it a fit object of attention at all periods, and it must still appear, as it long existed, the reigning monarch of the district which it adorns.

The ruins are kept carefully closed, the breaches in the walls repaired to a certain extent so as to exclude the idle and mischievous, and an advantage gained by the neighbouring hospital in the exhibition of the dungeons, towers, and chambers. This precaution keeps the interior courts, where it is in force, clean and uninterrupted; but the approach to this part of the building is not agreeable, in consequence of the army of ragged children who follow the visitor.

The enormous round tower stands in the inner court in a hollow which, in some positions, masks its real height, which is gigantic. It appears nearly as large at its base as the round tower of Windsor, but is infinitely higher; is blanched white as though with age and exposure to wea-

ther, the blocks of stone of which it is built are as sharp and square and compact as if lately renovated, and it is impossible to convince oneself of its real antiquity for some time, till the tour of its enormous bulk being made, it is discovered that the majestic structure is cleft from the crown to the foot in three places. Tradition says that an earthquake, in 1692, made these breaches, which neither time nor siege had been able to effect. There it stands, however, as strong as ever, with its sculptured head and its yawning openings, surrounded by the large towers, its attendants, which it frowns into insignificance. It is only when the unequal ground conceals its form for a time that the grandeur and size of the other defences are perceptible, and the Tours de Raoul, des Preux, des Chevaliers, and du Roi, assert their proper dignity. From the ruined windows of each of these the views of the surrounding country are exquisite, the Haute and Basse Fôret spread out their broad bosoms clothed with fine trees, and a wide extent presents itself of meadow and valley and plain, clustering villages, and distant mountains, all smiling and rich and grand.

There is still much curious sculpture left on the walls, remains of the former splendour of the place. The salle of the Grosse Tour in particular

has some fine bits: it was four stories high, but all the floorings have long since fallen in; the ground is heaped with their *débris* round. A well of incredible depth and size, such as usually existed in the interiors of fortified castles, astonishes the beholder by its dimensions, and the *oubliettes* of hideous memory are not forgotten. The walls are thirty-two French feet thick. Some remains of the sculptured lions of Coucy are to be seen; and two large blocks at the grand entrance still retain their form. These lions are objects of awe and interest to the peasants, and a legend explaining their presence is repeated to the stranger.*

* Du Cerceau, in his Bastiments de France, gives the following account of Coucy, accompanied by curious plates of the Château and details of the architecture, peculiarly interesting as it exists now only in fragments.

"Coussi est un Châsteau en Picardie assis sur un lieu hault eslevé, joignant iceluy est la ville. Ce fust basty par un Seigneur du lieu nommé Enguerrand de Coussy. Depuis il est advenu aux Rois de France, qui le tiennent encore pour le jourd'huy. Il est tout de pierre de quartier, toutefois sauvagement dressé pour le regard de la court. Quant aux choses remarquables et dignes d'êstre veuës il y a premièrement la grande salle longue de trente toises et sept et demie de large, comprins le Tribunal, auquel sont les figures des neuf Preuds. Joignant icelle s'en trouve une autre de dix toises et demie sur cinq et demie de large; à la cheminée de laquelle sont les neuf Preuses: et toutes les susdites figures tant de l'une que l'autre salle, rondes, faites selon le temps modernement. En la grande salle l'on voit encore une chapelle d'assez belle ordonnance. Aux quatre coigns du Château, y a quatre tours, chacune desquelles a dix

It appears that in the time of the famous warrior Enguerrand de Coucy, by whom the Château was built in the eleventh century, *a Lion* desolated the country far and near. A hermit, who lived in one of the forests adjacent, finding that the prayers, usually efficacious in such cases, produced no diminution of the ravages caused by the savage animal, solicited the knight's assistance to rid the neighbourhood of this scourge.

Armed *cap-à-pie*, the knight sallied forth guided by the holy man: they had not long entered the forest when at a sudden turn as they approached a pile of grey rocks half concealed by trees, the Hermit uttered an exclamation of fear, and pointed

toises de diamettre comprins la muraille. Dans la court se voit une autre tour, mais beaucoup plus grosse, ayāt quīnze toises de diamettre, qui font quarante cinq de circuit, sur la haulteur de vingt, sans l'exhausement des arcs, et est tellement admirable aux regards des autres, que combien qu'elles soient de bonne grosseur, si vous les contemplez contre celle-cy elles ne semblent que fuseaux.

" La place de dedans icelle a huist toises de diamettre vuide et les sept toises de reste sont les murailles, qui ont trois toises et demie d'épaisseur. En ceste tour y a trois étages voultez et au dessus est la terrace couverte de plombe. Le premier est garni de puits, moulin, cheminée, four, et le tout ce qui est nécessaire pour un fort. Les élévations desdits trois estages sont beaux comme pouvez penser par la mésure. Près de l'entrée est une pierre soustenue de trois figures de Lyons, et sur icelle une autre figure de Lyon. En la place et devant ladite figure se paye certain tribut par lès voisins du lieu, sçavoir est, qu'ils soīt tenus envoyer tous les ans un Rustique, ayant en sa main un

trembling to some object immediately before them. At the same instant a hideous roar announced the savage, who, as if aware of the hostile intentions of the pair, had come to meet them sooner than they expected. Enguerrand drew forth his trusty sword, and, as he received the attack of the monster, called out with a smile to his terrified companion, "Ha, ha—vous me l'avez de trop *près montré!*"

A furious combat ensued which ended in the defeat of the Lion, who was slain, and the country delivered from his violence. In memory of this event, the pious knight founded a monastery on the spot to which he gave the name of *Prémontré*, and caused to be represented over the entrance to his new château, carved in stone, the battle be-

fouet pour sonner d'iceluy trois coups: avec ce une hotte *pleine de tartes et gasteaux* qu'il fault qu'il distribue aux Seigneurs de là."

He then relates the legend of Prémontré and concludes,—"En tesmoignage de ce que dit est à l'entrée de la susdite grosse tour au dessus de l'huis est une figure armée tenant l'espée avec le Lyon, comme mesmes je le vous ay depeint. Quant aux commodités du bastiment il n'y en a pas beaucoup, excepté un corps de logis près l'entrée que le Roi François premier feit faire. A l'entour de la montaigne (sur laquelle le Chasteau est assis) sont plantées vignes, d'où procèdent les bons vins, qu'on appelle *De Coussy*. Le lieu, à cause de son élévation, a un beau regard. Devant qu'entrer au logis il fault passer par la basse Court qui eist fermée, tant de murailles que de tours: à l'entrée de laquelle se voyent aussi *quelques ruines*. La ville est petite, *toutefois nette*. Aux environs, en certains endroits se trouvent des bois."

tween himself and the Lion, which can still be traced.

There existed, till of late, that is, till the destruction of the great and powerful abbey of Prémontré, a ceremony called La Fête des Rissoles. The Abbot of Prémontré was obliged every year on this day to send a man-at-arms mounted on a horse fully caparisoned, bearing a *wheat measure* to the Lord of Coucy, filled with *rissoles*, a sort of fried condiment, commonly eaten by the people; a dog with a *rissole* in his mouth, preceded the procession which accompanied the man-at-arms. There were some quaint observances respecting the conduct of the horse, which decided whether he should be forfeited to the Lord of Coucy or whether the Abbot should gain a sum instead. The Lion in effigy was placed in a conspicuous position, and to him the man-at-arms did homage.

The hero of the sad tragedy, well-known in Troubadour history as the lover of La Dame de Fayel, was a Châtelain de Coucy, who was killed at the siege of Acre. When dying, he ordered his squire to preserve his heart, and place it in a casket to be delivered to his beloved lady, together with the last letter which his expiring hand traced. The Lord of Fayel, whose castle was near St. Quentin, unfortunately met the faithful messenger on his way to his lady: having killed him, he took the letter and the casket, and its precious

contents, were, by his order, made into a savoury dish, which he served up to his unconscious wife, who, having eaten of it, and being afterwards informed that it was the heart of her lover, starved herself to death.

This tragical story was so great a favourite with the early poets, that it is constantly repeated in their verses, and the circumstances attributed sometimes to one hero and sometimes to another. M. Françisque Michel has in his fine edition of the works of the Châtelain de Coucy in question, given it as his opinion, that he is the real personage to whom the tale refers. Probably, in these very walls, the ill-fated lover, whose mistress was denied him by her cruel relations, and afterwards forced to marry a man she detested, composed many of his beautiful and tender verses, to which the "fair unhappy" replied.

The following are translations of the originals, followed as nearly as possible.

## *Chansons of the Châtelain de Coucy.*

"La douce voix du louseignol sauvage," &c.

When the wild nightingale, with soft clear voice,
Sings night and day, and tells a thousand tales,
My soften'd heart can in his lays rejoice,
My pow'r comes back, and song at length prevails.
Yes — I should sing, since she delights to hear
Who long has held me in her gentle sway,
I should be pleased her pensive hour to cheer
And proud that she will listen to my lay.

Alas! no changeful thoughts my fancy knew
Since first I learnt, through her, to love so well;
I love, and serve, and praise —— as Poets do,
But never dare the tender *truth* to tell.
I have no language when she hears me speak,
Her beauty fills my soul with sweet dismay,
I dare not look upon her blooming cheek,
Yet have no pow'r to turn my eyes away.

The image in my breast is so enclos'd
I see none else. —— *He* felt such truth alone
Tristan, who drank the draught by love compos'd,
When Yseult shared the cup that made them one.
My hand, my heart, my reason, sense, and will,
Wait on her smiles, that all my soul inspire;
My life I hold as naught to serve her still,
Nor find ought hard, that love and she desire.

Go, song, and whisper all I dare not say,
For I am banish'd, yet still linger near,
Where foes surround and envy ev'ry lay
Nor would their melody should reach her ear.
Say that I still in ceaseless hope abide,
And beg from her some sweet return again,—
May Heav'n revenge their cruelty and pride
Who keep us sighing thus in absent pain!

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"Conment que longue demeure
Aie faite de chanter," &c.

For many a day my silent lute
Has all forgot that once it told,—
No more my chords shall now be mute,
For joy is mine, as once of old.
And Love can make me yet forget
Past hours of sorrow and regret:
New hope springs forth and brings to me
Mercy from thee!

Dear, gentle fair! who spite of wrong
Canst thus so kind and tender prove,—
A false one had not suffer'd long
The ills that wait upon our love!
Since I have learnt to prize thee more
Than all existence has in store,
'Tis well that my reward should be
Mercy from thee!

When perils were around me thrown,
Thou, Love! hast turn'd aside the blow,
When she who claims me as her own
I fear'd forgot my absent woe—
Thy aid sustain'd my long despair,
Or I had died without her care!
'Twere hard, sweet lady, not to see
Mercy from thee!

Sometimes the light thy love has given
Gleamed with a pale and waning glow,
And I have pray'd to pitying Heaven
That I might once thy meaning know:
And judge if 'twas but beauty shone
Within those brilliant eyes alone,
Or in their glance there yet might be
Mercy for me.

'Tis sin and shame and pain extreme
To feign a love as many do,
To vow and sigh, yet only *seem*,
And in all sorrow prove untrue;
Why, Heaven! consent they should deceive,
And while they lie make some believe?
Ah! but one word remains for me—
Mercy from thee!*

* These specimens are rendered from the interesting work of M. Francisque Michel on the Poetry of the Châtelain de Coucy. Paris. Techener. 1830.

Most of the Lords of Coucy distinguished themselves in the different ages in which they lived: some of the earlier Châtelains were, however, rather remarkable for their cruelty and oppression than for their justice. One of the most celebrated was an Enguerrand, who was sent as a hostage for King John of France to England, and who married a daughter of Edward III. He was one of the most accomplished, refined, and graceful knights of his time, learned, valiant, and wise, and a great favourite of Charles V. of France, who took every opportunity of evincing his respect and regard for him. He was offered, at the death of Du Guesclin, the bâton of Constable, but declined it in favour of Olivier de Clisson. He died a prisoner to the Turks in 1396, and his remains were ransomed and brought home to his widow and deposited in the Abbey of Nogent. His virtues and the sad consequences of his death are thus mentioned in a ballad of the time by Eustache Deschamps, bailli de Senlis.

In all his conquests mercy swayed,
In every place his goodness shone,
All hearts his tender power obeyed,
And just and mild his reign was known:
For him are many hearts in pall,
No kindred knight his arms shall bear,
His noble race extinguished all,
His wide domains the strangers share:

Mourn, towers! no more in princely state,
As when ye owned his high controul—
Weep clergy, nobles, poor, his fate,
And give your prayers to rest his soul!

Our arrival in the quiet little town of Coucy, like that of most strangers, seemed to create some sensation, as we afterwards found. Probably with a view of doing us honour, or perhaps to cut a figure on the approaching market-day, our opposite neighbour, a saddler and harness-maker, whose trade was indicated by two dyed sheep-skins hung at his door, resolved that his shop should exhibit a handsome appearance. Accordingly he had ordered two of his men to beat the dust out of these woolly symbols, that they might look new and brilliant at our levée. All night the heat had been intense, and the noise worse; at midnight we heard the voice of our tyrant departing for Laon, and after he was gone, coaches, carts, wagons, and horses, seemed in a combination to deprive us of sleep; at length a short pause ensued which, as day broke, was interrupted by a knocking, loud, long, and measured, and apparently interminable, and of such a peculiar sound that we were quite unable to account for it. The mystery was unravelled by our attendant nymph, who, throwing the persiannes wide open, exhibited to our regards

the active harness-makers just giving the last blow, and proceeding to hang up their fleecy sign in all its cerulean glory.

We soon forgot our vexations in most agreeable wanderings about the neighbourhood, and found in the evening a most delicious retreat in the tower gardens belonging to the Pomme d'Or. These were arranged in terraces, the highest being the plateau of one of the great towers of the town. They were full of flowers, chiefly roses of various kinds; mossy seats were to be found, formed of parts of the antique wall and shaded by acacias and other light trees. Shining out clear and distinct against the intensely blue sky, the whole range of the fine castle towers appeared at a short distance, raised on the high mound which elevates them above the plain, and the majestic Grosse Tour, with its delicately carved crown and its deep rents, grew whiter and whiter as the soft shades of evening came gradually on. I never beheld so glorious a sunset as followed, though the more experienced eye of our hostess saw in its brilliant hues and the increasing crimson which at last flooded the whole heavens, indications of a storm. Presently a vivid flash of lightning issued from a cloud above the summit of Enguerrand's tower, and was followed in rapid succession by others, a deep purple canopy

seemed drawn slowly over the gold and crimson sky, and hung suspended, as if waiting a given signal to pour down its concealed thunders. The sharp mournful wail of the screech-owl rose suddenly close to us as, emerging from the ivy, its light form was whirled along by the increasing breeze, the welcome and refreshing air was full of perfume, and the charm of the moment was increased by the rising of a fine bright moon, which promised by its light to overcome the dark clouds that threatened above.

Our hostess, an honest simple woman, had brought, to introduce to us, a young *ouvrière*, whom she called Therèse, that she might give us all the information we had asked relative to the neighbourhood. "Therèse," she said, "can talk well, and knows all the stories of the places round: she will be your guide, if you please, to all the prettiest spots, and, as she is very genteel and much above her position, you will like her for a companion: she is a perfect treasure to me, for if I am absent she keeps my keys and can manage the house as well as I can. She is a good girl, and very industrious, and supports her mother." All this was said aside, while Therèse was gathering us a bouquet, and we were soon aware that she would be indeed an acquisition when she began to speak. She was full of in-

formation, and very eloquent in her descriptions, seemed to have a strong feeling for the beauties of nature, was pretty, graceful, and had something about her very different from the ordinary run of *ouvrières*, — an occasional tone almost approaching to haughtiness, a good deal of independence of manner, checked by natural politeness, and a sadness which seemed to struggle with her youthful cheerfulness and sometimes predominated. We made her the companion of our walks when her business would permit, and were greatly interested in all we gathered of her history. While we were enjoying with her the freshness of the air on our tower, a low growl near made us imagine the lion of Coucy, whose legend she was then relating, was close beside us; the thunder suddenly bursting from its prison-cloud left us, however, in no doubt that the storm, long withheld, was beginning. Assisted by Therèse to descend the steps of the flowery terraces, we managed to grope our way, for all was now black and lurid: the lightning flashes showed us our path, and so splendidly did they play round the venerable castle that we could scarcely be prevailed on to quit the spot where we saw a scene of such majestic beauty. The prudence of our pretty guide, however, got the better, and we left our tower a prey to the

tempest, just gaining shelter before the whole of its vengeance broke forth. For many hours the roaring of the thunder and its echoes amongst the old towers was awful, and the continuous glare of the lightning made the darkness of the sky more fearful. Alas! the long-wished-for rain was now come, and was destined to continue, with but short intervals, during the whole summer!—however, the relief it brought at the time was great, and for the remainder of our sojourn at Coucy the coolness and freshness was delicious, and enabled us to enjoy the woods and woodlands still more.

The church of Coucy is a beautiful specimen of early architecture, and is seen to advantage from the terrace of a fine house belonging to a gentleman of the town, who with extreme politeness invited us to visit every part of his grounds, and the interesting apartments once visited by Henry IV., and where the fair Gabrielle presented him with her first child, afterwards Duke de Vendôme. A small plate of copper over a chimney-piece records the event: it is defaced at one corner, and tradition says that the imperious beauty, not content with the wording of the inscription, in a fit of passion threw a heavy candlestick at it, which caused the fracture. Henry, with his usual imprudence, left

his troops and ventured through the midst of enemies from Laon, then besieged by him, to visit the object of his adoration: it appears that he profited by the absence of Sully, who had just left him for a time, or he would probably have been dissuaded from so dangerous a journey. He had hardly returned to the camp when his faithful friend arrived, and to his surprise found the king in bed, although it was three o'clock in the day. Nothing could be more rudely simple than the couch on which he reposed, a paillasse and two mattresses on the floor. "Welcome, dear Sully," said he, embracing him. "You are, no doubt, astonished, you who know me well, to see me in bed at this time of day; for I am not used to be idle when there is so much to do. But I tired myself so excessively last night, that I cannot sit up; and in order that you may not suspect me of counterfeiting, I will show you my feet." So saying he uncovered his feet and showed them covered with wounds and scratches, which he had gained by climbing amongst the vines and briars and thorns of the mountains, exposing himself to the greatest fatigue and constant danger, in order to accelerate the works of the siege; not allowing his duties as general to be neglected in consequence of his love expeditions.

Coucy la Ville is at some little distance from Coucy le Château, and the walk to it is beautiful, through fresh fields and along pretty lanes. The church is very curious, and its pierced and ornamented spire a fine object in the landscape; a few singular brasses still remain on the floor, but there are no tombs. The Château de Verneuil is not far from this place, and is a picturesque specimen of the domestic architecture of the sixteenth century. The majestic towers of Coucy le Château are seen from its windows and gardens, as if close by, and, in summer weather, this country-house must be very enjoyable, though how the carriage of the lady to whom it belongs contrives to reach it by so rugged a road is a mystery.

Our next walk was with Therèse to see the ruined tower of Moyenbrie, in a thick wood about two miles from Coucy: our way lay across a beautiful tangled heathery plain skirting the forest, by the side of exhausted quarries, from whence yellow sand was taken, used in making glass bottles, and formerly stone for the buildings of the vicinity. These quarries serve as habitations to numerous poor families, and the chimneys of their subterranean dwellings appearing above the ground have a very singular effect. Round and above the entrances of these

caves are pretty gardens neatly kept, and the whole underground village has an air of propriety and cleanliness remarkably striking. The woods were ringing to their inmost recesses with the notes of nightingales, and the large rain drops, still hanging from the leaves of the thick trees, glittered like diamonds with the reflection of the intruding sunbeams, which occasionally broke through the grey clouds. All was still and solitary as we wandered on amongst the overarching branches, till we reached the tower of Moyenbrie, apparently coeval with the château of Coucy. A modern house has been built on the site of the rest of the castle, and the old tower has served as a chapel, its spire similar to that of Coucy la Ville. The vaulting is still entire, and a rosette in the centre is formed, instead of the leaves of a flower, which it at first resembles, of grotesque faces grouped together.

The former dwelling-house is being destroyed, and a new one building in its stead. The park and gardens must have been delightful: magnificent avenues of trees extend in all directions to a great distance, and the remains of rare flowering shrubs amongst the wild foliage indicate where the ornamental gardens were. One sequestered spot Therèse led us to, where grew a gigantic yew-tree, which it appears has long

been the admiration of the country, and indeed regarded with no little degree of awe by the peasants. She told us with a sigh, that when a child she often came here to gather a branch, when the good, kind, and beloved master, M. de Milly, lived there and dispensed the blessings of his benevolence to all the neighbourhood. "He was very kind to me," she added, "and would have me constantly to see him and walk about with him in the gardens. *It so happened*, that our names were the same even to the *De*, which however we have now dropped, and this, perhaps, pleased him. He was very good to my mother, and left us a little pension, all he could afford, for he was so generous, that at his death there was hardly anything left, and, to the great grief of the country, he was obliged to leave his château, which he could not keep up, and go to Paris, where he died about fifteen years ago. Though I was but a little child, I can never forget or cease to regret him: he was such a kind friend, and used to tell me all he should like to do, if he had money enough to make improvements. Here he would have placed a fountain, and there a temple—but it all ended long ago."

We learnt by degrees from our interesting guide that this M. de Milly was said to be a

natural son of Louis XVI. by Madame de Courval, to whose family the Château de Moyenbrie belonged. The uncle of Madame de Courval left the estate to this son, but the fortune he was able to give him was insufficient to support the expenses of his liberality and princely munificence. In person he is described to have been extremely like the Bourbon family, and to have inherited all their virtues, without, apparently, their defects. Therèse was also an illegitimate child, and it was more than hinted that the *accident* of her bearing the name of De Milly was not unexplained. Her mother, however, was respected, and had always conducted herself well; and this rural scion of the Bourbons was no disgrace to her royal birth. She must have suspected the truth, and it may account for the slight appearance of discontent in her manner, her scarcely-repressed haughtiness, and a certain dignity about her which her assumed humility did not altogether conceal.

Our return through the very centre of the wood, which is on a hill, was sufficiently precipitous, and not a little amusing. We slipped and slid along the narrow path, intercepted by thick underwood and flowers, down which a little torrent made its way, till, on reaching the valley, the towers of Coucy rose before us on the oppo-

site hill; and after fording a rocky stream which separated us from the steep road, formerly the only one to Soissons, we mounted by that rugged and romantic pass and regained the postern gate which led to our hotel.

We were amused at the observations of Therèse on some Sœurs de la Croix whom we met, accompanied by two good-looking priests. She said they seldom entered the order, except they had lost their hopes of getting married. I remarked that one was remarkably pretty, and very young. "Oh, she will no doubt find a husband all the same," said she; "the vows go for nothing in such a case, for they are *only* religious vows, and can always be got over. So *these people* think, who are always in extremes, and do not know the meaning of what they undertake. Neither the Church nor the nobility are cared about as they used to be—every one does as he likes. You will hear our peasants called *Monsieur*, and all our merchants and tradespeople are *Counts* and *Marquises;* for no one knows his own position." She laughed somewhat bitterly as she spoke, and I thought, probably, this regret for the old system of things, and contempt for the new, might be an echo of her mother's sentiments, rather than an idea derived from her own experience; and we could not help picturing the pair seated in their

solitary cottage, and looking back on old times when their protector's woods were waving, and the smoke from his château invited the poor to seek relief in his hospitable halls.

About half a league from Coucy is the pretty village of Folembray, where was a château, called Le Pavillon, built by François I. as a hunting-lodge to Coucy, which he found too severe and guarded for a pleasant residence. A few ruins only remain of it, but the walk to the place is beautiful.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Route to Soissons. — Dangerous Roads. — Misadventures. — Soissons. — Druidical Remains. — Roman Pavement. — Clovis and the Vase. — St. Medard. — The Abbé Dupont. — Louis le Débonnaire. — St. Jean des Vignes. — Thomas à Becket. — Louis XV. and the Bell. — St. Wouël and the Devil.

We took our leave of Coucy on a beautiful day, having revisited the well-kept walks and venerable walls of the fine ruin, probably the grandest which exists in France. We found a stranger sketching, whose views, though correct, were not chosen with taste, and were extremely entertained by the pains he took to impress us with the idea of his dignity, assuring us that he was not an artist by profession. This weakness, amongst mang other instances we met with, struck us as sitting very ill on a people who profess contempt for rank and station, and boast of rendering to art and genius the respect which they deserve.

Our route to Soissons led through a charming wood belonging to Count Frederic de la Rochefoucault, whose château is at Nogent in the

neighbourhood. We shared the *diligence* with a pretty young woman, under the care of her brother, a priest, extremely like her: they were going to see some relations, and seemed in high spirits. At first our road was good, but the rapid pace at which our driver went was rather startling; this pace he did not slacken when we entered the wood, and at every hundred yards our way became more and more rugged. One of the horses was very restive, and had been kicking most unceremoniously all the way. We were suddenly alarmed by a violent jolt, as we plunged into a deep rut and came to a stop, the axle-tree having given way, and the lumbering vehicle *plantée là*. The *conducteur*, on discovering the fact, began to bemoan himself, wringing his hands and gazing in despair at our condition. No entreaties, however would induce him to let us out of our prison, till we represented the impossibility of the carriage ever being dragged out if we remained. An active and zealous friend of his own accordingly lending a hand, after procuring a new pole in the wood, and the vivacity of the restive horse being restrained, the coach was rescued from its position, and by dint of much splicing and cording we were in a condition to proceed. All this time the cuckoos and nightingales had kept up a con-

tinued concert, so loud, so full, and so incessant that we could scarcely hear our own voices or, fortunately, those of our guardians.

Half a league more of ruts, a foot deep on each side, much jolting and vehement urging, brought us into the main road. When the new one is completed from Coucy, which will join this, the wood and all its dangers will be avoided. The driver traverses this, however, twice every day, yet he never thinks it necessary to take any precaution, and seemed as much surprised at our accident as if he had never seen or felt the ruts before.

The woods and valleys in this part of the journey were exquisite; the road was immensely wide, a defect which is not avoided in the new ones, which are being made everywhere, yet our driver preferred keeping at the very edge of a precipice the whole way; and when, as we expected, his pole broke again, he could hardly be made to comprehend the superior safety of leading his angry and impatient horses nearer the opposite side while he arranged his harness. "C'est ennuyant! mais je suis là—il n'y a pas de danger!" were his exclamations as with one hand he held the broken pole, and with the other tried to push one of the curveting horses from the edge of the ravine.

He at length acknowledged with a smile that our advice was worth attending to, and after half an hour's further delay, recollecting that, as he carried the mail, he might cause some uneasiness in Soissons, he set off at a furious pace, without stop or stay, and never paused till by the light of a fine moon we rattled into the town, and found ourselves safely deposited at the Croix d'Or.

Modern Soissons, although a new town, generally well paved, with airy streets, and good plain, not "brown brick," but *stone* "houses," cannot console us for the loss of all that was venerable within its rampart walls. Yet it has recollections about it so interesting that it must always attract attention. The fertile banks of the Aisne were amongst the first settlements of the *men of the forests*, called by the Romans *Celts;* and here the flocks of the Kimri wandered through the valleys and roamed through the woods of the extensive *Suessonnaise*, the great mother of the forests of Compeigne, Retz, and Villers-Cotteretz, of those of Dole, Fère, and Ris. Here, where till of late spirits made resort, might be heard the interrogations of the mysterious haunters of the Druid stones, who addressed the traveller on his way and revealed to him the future. Here the Druid priest raised his altar and offered his sacrifice, enveloping himself in clouds which have never

been dispelled. Here, in 1732, on clearing away some old buildings, was found a small oaken coffer, containing two girdles, woven with thread of gold and crimson, ornamented with clasps of gold, and massive gold medallions enamelled in various colours and representing figures of priests and divinities: silver rings of various sizes were pendant from these belts, destined, doubtless, to support instruments of sacrifice. M. Martin, whose history of the town is interesting, imagines that these ornaments might have been worn by a priest of Isis, the wondrous goddess of a thousand names: but the learned have no longer an opportunity of deciding on the question, for those who had the direction of a new hospital, conceiving that the money they might produce would aid the good cause better than all the speculations of the *antiquaires*, sold the treasures for 115 *livres tournois*, and the priceless gold was melted into ingots! The victorious and irresistible Cæsar has left traces of his power in the city he conquered after more than usual trouble; and Augustus laid the first stone of a temple dedicated to Isis and Serapis, which stone was found beneath a mass of ruin, and is now to be seen in the museum. A Roman pavement, too, in a perfect state was long the boast of the museum, but that which time had so long spared was reduced to powder by the cannon of 1814, when Soissons was taken and

retaken four times. A precious remain of antiquity, however, may still delight the curious eye in the Musée of the Louvre, whither it was transported from the spot where a fortunate accident brought it to light: this is a group of figures larger than life, representing the children of Niobe. It is a variation, not a copy, of the famous group at Florence, exquisite in expression and execution, but unfortunately headless. A very sentimental treasure was also rescued from oblivion, in the shape of a bronze ring engraved with these words,

"Non tituli pretium, sed amantis accipe curam,"

which M. Martin conjectures, as well from the delicacy of the sentiment as the *fault of quantity*, to have been written by a fair Roman and given to her lover, who had quitted her for the land of barbarians.

The Romans seem to have delighted in the vine-clad hills of their conquest, until a somewhat singular command of one of their governors (Domitian) caused all the vines of the country to be rooted up. This absurd decree, though strictly enforced, did not long deprive the inhabitants of one of their chief boasts, and the wine of the Soissonais had, at one time, a reputation superior to that of its neighbours of Champagne. A new era was, however, approaching, in which this

favoured portion of the Gallic empire took its share. According to religious legends, before the end of the third century, twelve enterprising Christian pilgrims, having received the benediction of the Bishop of Rome at the tomb of the Apostle Peter, set out, staff in hand, to preach their new faith in those wild regions where Paganism reigned triumphant. Their success was great, and numerous were the martyrs gained to heaven from year to year; amongst others a virgin named Macra was fortunate enough to obtain the crown, and is one of the first spoken of as having suffered in the neighbourhood of Soissons. Then began the events which have given rise to a host of traditions, and excited multitudes to dedicate their lives and their worldly goods to the service of heaven, desirous of emulating those whose real acts of devotion and virtue have been deformed by ignorant and superstitious relations, till they have come to be doubted altogether. Clovis, the first Christian King, appears, before his conversion, to have had a somewhat arbitrary notion of justice, which the following anecdote relating to the famous Vase of Soissons will illustrate. One day Clovis, returning from an expedition to some neighbouring cities, was crossing the territory of Reims, and passed under the ramparts of that town,

which had not yet acknowledged his supremacy. The monarch, who had a great respect for the friend of his Christian wife, St. Remy, was anxious that his soldiers should not enter the town, being aware of their propensity to pillage; but he was unable to restrain them, and, in spite of his orders, a band entered Reims, and finding no resistance, fell upon everything within their reach, pillaging without mercy, as he had anticipated. Amongst other valuables from numerous churches they brought way a vase of great size and beauty. St. Remy, afflicted at this loss, sent to Clovis and entreated the monarch to restore to him this vase, even if he were unable to give him back the rest. Clovis answered the envoys,—"Follow me to the city of Soissons, where all will be divided which has been *acquired*, and should the vase fall to my lot I will gratify the desire of the holy father." On their return to Soissons the Franks, as was their custom, placed all the booty in a common heap: Clovis asked of them the vase over and above his part: no one objected, till one of the soldiers raising his two-edged axe, with a savage clamour exclaimed, "Thou shalt have nothing, O king! but what chance may give thee;" so saying, he struck the vase a heavy blow with his axe. The king endured the insolence with apparent patience;

nevertheless, he took the vase injured as it was, and gave it to the envoys of St. Remy, keeping his anger hidden in his heart. According to the custom of the Germans, at the end of winter the tribe of the Salians assembled under arms to deliberate on future expeditions, on public affairs, and civil and commercial proceedings. These meetings were called *mall.* The next year the *mall* was formed, and Clovis prepared to make a general inspection of the arms of his soldiers; when he reached the man who had struck the vase, he suddenly called out, "There is none here whose armour is so dirty and ill kept as thine: neither thy lance nor thy axe is fit for service!" So saying, he seized his axe and cast it on the ground; as the man stooped to pick it up, Clovis raised his own and clove his skull—"Let the same be done to thee," cried he, "as thou didst to the vase in the city of Soissons." This summary mode of administering justice was beheld without murmurs, and the redoubted chief's act was looked on as a punishment due to want of discipline.

A walk across fields of rye and flax, or by the banks of the clear river, leads to the ruins of the once famous Abbey of St. Medard. Every vestige above ground has disappeared, but on ringing the bell of a dwelling situated at the

extremity of a long and fine avenue of limes, we were invited to enter and view the establishment for the deaf and dumb. In a large square were a number of healthy-looking boys at play, and being shown into a pretty cool parlour we were shortly joined by the Abbé Dupont, the creator and director and sole supporter of this most interesting and benevolent institution. We learnt from the frank, intelligent, and enthusiastic Abbé, that, in his solitary curacy of Coucy le Château, he formed the idea of instructing this afflicted portion of his fellow creatures; that in order to obtain funds to aid him in his philanthropic intention, he sold a fine collection of antique medals, which after many years he had gathered together with antiquarian zeal. By little and little his plans began to ripen, and the children of his adoption, whom he supported, clothed, and fed, promised so well, that he felt sure the scheme must succeed. He found that a large deserted tan-house was to be sold: he hesitated not to purchase this shelter for his protégés, and, aided by a few benevolent persons, in the short space of sixteen months he has been able to form the noble establishment which, since it has now attracted the attention of the Queen of France, will doubtless prosper, and by its success reward the exertions of the

benevolent man, who has given up all his own quiet enjoyments to devote his time and attention solely to perfect the institution. He has now twenty-five pupils, male and female, who remain there till a suitable trade has been found for them. Sixteen are gratuitous, and the expenses of the good Abbé cannot but be considerable: but his whole soul is in the cause. Occasional visitors contribute their mite towards the support of the institution, and a lottery is at this moment on foot, to which all the female part of the royal family have sent offerings, and for which many ladies of distinction have employed themselves. It is on this spot that once stood the celebrated Abbey of St. Medard, and the Abbé can show all that yet remains. He is about to employ his boys in a labour of excavation, which has already been singularly fortunate; and by and bye many hidden treasures of tombs and statues, and vases and urns, will no doubt be disinterred, and his desire accomplished of seeing a perfect chapel established in the magnificent *crypt* which is the pride and wonder of Soissons, and should be of all France, or, according to the learned M. Bethmann of Hanover, of all Europe, for such another specimen of a construction of the sixth century does not exist. The perfect shape of the subterranean

chapel is exquisitè—the regularity of the building, its grace and loftiness, the apparent freshness of the stone,. the sharpness of the pillars,. the painting still vivid, altogether strike the beholder with astonishment: round the principal chapel hollowed in the walls are niches for seats of a form very rare and curious in their simplicity: the roofs are finely groined, the windows spacious, and the whole range free from damp or chill. When altogether arranged it will form a most interesting monument,—it is so indeed at this moment—thanks to the care of M. Dupont, and antiquaries from far and near will crowd to see it, as pilgrims hurried to the shrine of St. Medard of old. The Abbé has a liberal, though, perhaps, somewhat romantic notion, of hereafter fitting up a part of the premises as a residence for strangers whom a love of art may lead to the spot, and there he proposes they shall be received, and remain at liberty to prosecute their studies as long as they please; consulting a library that is to be at their service, and a museum which, together with a valuable collection of enamels and paintings by ancient masters of rare excellence, the Abbé can himself furnish. The position of the school is one of singular beauty, and the choice of it does great credit to the taste of the monks of St. Medard

of old. A splendid view is obtained from all the windows, and spacious gardens and fine groves surround the house—where the nightingale and cuckoo in the spring season keep up a continual concert. Embowered in this solitude sleep, perhaps still to be discovered, the two kings, Clothaire and Sigibert, both benefactors to and enlargers of the enormous building, which grew with centuries till revolutionary rage swept away all traces of its existence. A fine head, supposed to be of Clothaire, is to be seen in M. Dupont's collection; and a beautiful little female head, with the hair gilt, and delicately formed features, is another of the treasures lately found beneath the ruined walls. The legend of St. Medard is told of several other saints; but if his bones really became too heavy to proceed until the king had granted all the land required to build the abbey, there certainly could be no blame attached to the saint, for a more salubrious or charming spot could not have been selected by him.

But perhaps the most interesting recollection attached to the remains of this monastery is that of a portion of it having been the prison of the unfortunate Louis le Débonnaire, who was confined here by his son Clothaire in the year 833:—

"I was conducted," recounts the deposed mon-

arch himself, according to his historian the monk Odilon, " by a hostile troop to the monastery of the saints *my lords*, and as it was known to my enemies that I greatly loved this place, it was hoped that I would, of my own accord, abandon arms and adopt the religious habit. After having thrown me into a prison, they announced to me that my wife was dead, and that my innocent child, my little Karl, he who was my best beloved of all, had been shaven and forced to enter a monastery. At this news I could no longer contain my grief, deprived as I was of my kingdom, of my wife and my child. I wept for many days, and felt myself consuming away in consequence of the weight of my misfortunes. I had no one to console me but God alone — all access to the great church of St. Medard, all communication with the brotherhood was interdicted, except at rare intervals, when I was closely watched by my guards. Still I had occasionally the power of pouring out my sorrows at the sacred altars; and I implored the holy lords St. Medard and St. Sebastian to intercede for the repose of my wife's soul, for I believed her to have passed from this life. I then was reconducted to my prison, in those dungeons which had, alas! become too familiar to me."

This cell, which is still to be seen, is only four

feet wide and about seven long: it contains two recesses; opening into it is a vaulted cave which might have been a chapel, and near it another of smaller dimensions where guards were probably stationed.

Two verses in Gothic character, with abbreviations, are cut deeply into the wall of the prison, and have been attributed to Louis le Débonnaire; but, however appropriate to his misfortunes they may be, they are of the fifteenth century, and were no doubt traced by the hand of one equally wretched, though probably of less exalted rank. Louis, it should be remembered, would have expressed his complaints in *la langue tudesque.* At all events there is misery enough in the following simple words to excite sympathy for the captive who allowed himself the sad consolation of recording his feelings:—

Hélas ! je suis bien prins
De douleurs que j'endure,
Morrir me conviendroit, la
Peine me tient dure.

It is impossible on beholding Soissons as it is, and considering it as it has been, not to sigh after the gorgeous monuments which time and war have swept away, until scarcely a trace of them remains. However, the cathedral is still

in part there, shorn indeed of its glories, having but one beautiful tower left, and kept together by repairs, in which solidity rather than taste has been the aim of the architect. Wherever the inquiring stranger wanders, on the ramparts or in the streets, far or near, looking down upon him, as from the clouds, appear two buildings of very different character, but which equally excite his attention, and appear to divide the town between them. One is the dilapidated but venerable Cathedral, the other the pinnacles of St. Jean des Vignes, once a monastery of enormous extent, guarded, battlemented, moated, and surrounded with every sort of defence, embosomed in vineyards and gardens, wealthy, powerful, and proud. Of all its glories nothing now remains, but the fragile shell of its exquisitely beautiful façade. Its aërial spires and elevated portal still overlook the valley of the Aisne, the bright blue sky gleams through the fretted windows, and the glorious sun lights up the ogives of its delicate galleries: it stands as a monument of art, unrivalled in its grace, but its fairy-like texture seems

> So white, so faint, the slightest gale
> Might whirl it

at once to destruction,—yet there it stands, with

nothing to support the beautiful tower; and the surmounting steeple appearing like a toy cut in alabaster or ivory, which the hand of a child could destroy in a moment.

The majestic rival of St. Jean des Vignes, the haughty and imposing mass of St. Crépin le Grand, has not even a stone left on its site to tell where it stood; and all the jealousies and contentions of the monks of the "two houses," are at rest for ever, though for centuries they divided the country into factions to maintain their quarrels. All the relics and treasures once possessed by these rich establishments have long since been scattered to the winds or melted into coin; and Soissons now cares little for her former pride, rejoicing as she does in her commerce, and the wealth of her population. It matters little now, whether the monks of the one monastery or the other had the right to ring their bells first, or stand in the place of honour in the Cathedral;—it avails not that the relics of St. Gregory or the martyred St. Sebastian were possessed *by both*; all all are nothing, and ages have passed away since the abbots and monks disputed *à l'outrance* for the honour of their community. No longer do the mothers of Soissons warn their heedless children to beware of "*la bête à Béra qui est dans la rue avec ses cornes!*" in memory of the redoubtable

Count Bersald or Bérald, whose domestic stag was accustomed to run freely about the streets, to the terror of young and old;—no more does the spirit appear of the vexed canon, pursued by two devils, who returned to earth after death, to warn his companion and friend of the danger of incurring divine anger, repeating in a terrific voice—"*Il est horrible de choir dans les mains du Dieu vivant!*" Few now are aware of the illustrious guest which the walls of these abbeys once contained; few know that here the sainted Thomas à Becket, escaping from the dangerous shelter of St. Bertin, of St. Omer, which was too near his indignant and outraged sovereign, arrived to claim the willing hospitality of his friends, and was here met by Louis VII., the rival in love and war of Henry II., and the former husband of the fatal heiress of Aquitaine. Yet in Soissons, encouraged by pope and cardinals, king and people, the great rebel came to pay his vow before the shrine of the thrice-blessed Confessor *Drausin*,* who had the power of rendering invincible those who asked

* A precious relic kept in the abbey was a certain cross thus named in an ancient poem called Garin le Loherain, lately published by M. Paulin, Paris. The Poet relates, that a certain Duke Henry or Herrik, after a great combat against the Normans on the banks of the Aisne, saw a black cross floating towards him against the tide. Henry spurred his horse into the bed

his aid with warlike intent, and who watched all night by his tomb: for this purpose, from Burgundy and Italy flocked numerous champions, who, it seems, never prayed in vain. "Here the Archbishop passed three nights in orison, in the churches of Nôtre Dame and St. Medard, after which he departed towards Vezelay, whence he proposed to launch his excommunications on the day of Pentecost." Six centuries after this a chapel was shown in St. Jean des Vignes, where Thomas the Sainted had celebrated mass, and which, after his murder, had been dedicated to

of the river, and drew forth the miraculous cross without wetting his garments.

> Si l'emporta au Moustier *Saint Drosin,*
> Encore y est, oncques puis n'en partit . . . .
> Veiller y vont encor li pélerin,
> Cil qui bataille veulent fère et fournir.

Until 1567, a fatal year for the relics of Soissons, the relics of St. Drausin were carried in procession from the Cathedral to the well in the Rue St. Gaudin, into which that Saint was said to have been precipitated by the citizens whom he reproved for their wickedness. In 1584, this well was enclosed in the garden of a Canon. Its water was considered sovereign against fevers. At the door of the house where it was to be found the image of St. Drausin was placed with the following quatrain:—

> Qui veut guérir de fièvres et frissons
> Vienne céans boire au puits du jardin,
> Auquel jadis fut jeté St. Gaudin
> Noble martyr, évesque de Soissons.

him. But the manufacturers of Soissons never dream of these things, content with their new and comfortable houses, built upon the site of edifices where such strange doings abounded. "*Tout ça ce sont des choses de la religion, qu'on ne connait pas maintenant,*" is the reply to any inquiry on these *auld warld* subjects.

The armies of the Huguenots of 1567 paid but little respect to the beautiful fabrics which were the boast of Soissons. Statues, paintings, ornaments, were destroyed wherever they were met with—large fires were made in the churches, into which the archives and precious volumes were thrown by the pitiless soldiery—all the gold and silver melted on the spot, and little left but a wreck of the fine buildings given up to them as a spoil. Nevertheless, the ashes of St. Gregory, enclosed in a white damask bag covered with gold lace, were conveyed by water to the dwelling of the tailor of the Abbey of St. Medard, who brought the precious sack to the Abbess of Nôtre Dame. By the wit and presence of mind of this lady, some of the riches of the Abbey of St. Crépin were rescued. She obtained permission to carry away what remained of provisions, and her agents contrived to fill vessels with jewels, relics, and papers, which were placed in barrels between barrels of wine, and thus carried

off by the drunken soldiery themselves to Nôtre Dame. All that was then spared has since been sacrificed: and the only surprise is, that after such devastation carried on for centuries, any vestige of antiquity can be found.

The following anecdote of the youth of Louis XV. is related at Soissons. Languet de Gersey, a protégé of Madame de Maintenon, had been appointed Bishop of Soissons, and received the young king Louis XV. on the occasion of his passing through on his way to be crowned at Reims. He was a finished courtier, having passed his youth "*dans les antechambres des dames du palais*," and spared no cost or trouble to please his illustrious guest; so well did he succeed, that, on the king's return from Reims, he remained three days longer with the merry and obliging bishop. On this occasion a scene took place more childish than dignified, in which Louis played a distinguished part. Illuminations, fireworks, triumphal arches, and loads of *bonbons* were prepared for the royal child and his court. He was then twelve years of age, and though already affianced to the Infanta of Spain was but a boy in every respect. He was taken out into the balcony of the garden of the bishop's palace, to present himself to the children of Soissons, who were assembled there to behold him, when, on a sudden, a hundred

rabbits were driven into the enclosure, who began to scamper in every direction to conceal themselves, while a peal of firearms and the ascent of numerous rockets added to the bustle and confusion. The delighted children, uttering loud cries, forgot in a moment the presence of the king, and rushed off in hot pursuit from hedge to hedge. Louis could not behold this scene unmoved; he escaped from his party, darted down the grand staircase, and in a moment was amongst the laughing and vociferous group: with equal ardour he followed the chase, until, having succeeded in capturing one of the unfortunate animals, he returned in triumph to his somewhat scandalized attendants, holding his struggling prisoner by the ears. All the children having managed to be equally successful, were afterwards introduced to his majesty, each grasping his prize; and much and long was the laughter on the occasion, doubtless to the infinite gratification of the reverend prelate, whose fortunate plan had so much amused his guest. The next day Louis, anxious for a new opportunity of distinguishing himself in mischief, slipped away from his people, quitted the palace, and got into the cathedral, where he met an aged canon, to whom he expressed his desire to mount to the top of the tower. The old man hastened to conduct him to the steps which lead

to the great bells; the king, in an instant, sprang up to them, and got to the summit before his guide had reached half way. There he suspended himself to the cord of a bell which was never rung but in case of fire, and ringing it with all his might, cried out at the very highest pitch of his voice,—"Fire! fire!" An alarm was spread throughout the town, and while the inhabitants were seeking in all quarters to discover where the conflagration had broken out, the officers of the king, his governor, and all the court, were in consternation at the absence of their royal charge. At last he was found at the ringer's place, and rescued from the perilous situation in which he had placed himself; for it was a mere chance that he had not fallen through one of the numerous yawning openings of the old gallery. He gave the terrified bellringer a silver cup engraved with the arms of France, in return for having usurped his post; and on his return many years afterwards to Soissons with the dauphin, he related this escapade, and forbade him to visit the tower, from the dangers of which he had escaped.

Although so much that is antique in Soissons has disappeared, yet superstition preserves a few legends still; and that attached to the Rue de Montrevers once held so high a place, that it

ought not to be neglected in an account of the town.

About the end of the seventh century lived St. Wouël, or Wodoël, or Hoël: he was a simple monk, who had left his native Welsh or Scotch mountains on a pious pilgrimage, and had sought Nôtre Dame de Soissons, where he attached himself to the service of the holy men of the abbey; but in order to live more retired and pass his existence in more abstracted contemplation, he chose a cell near the walls of the town, where he became an example of sanctity and devotion.

The Abbess Hildegarde, who looked upon him with the utmost veneration, was accustomed to send him his daily repast on a silver dish. Wouël, in the benevolence of his heart, gave his dinner to a poor man, who not only devoured it, but disappeared with the costly dish, leaving the pious anchorite to the anger of the abbess, who would not credit his account of its being stolen. Overwhelmed with her reproaches, he prostrated himself with humility, without replying a word; then rising up, he took his staff, quitted his retreat, and recommenced his pilgrimage, which he continued for nine long years, meeting by the way with numerous adventures.

During this time, the Devil, taking advantage of the absence of the holy recluse, established

himself as absolute master of the town of Soissons. He chose his domicile in a cavern in the Rue de Montrevers, and from thence was in the habit of issuing forth, maltreating and sometimes carrying off whoever of the passers-by was so unlucky as to be the thirteenth. A servant of the abbey, too bold and too incredulous, resolved to dare the adventure, and passed the thirteenth. The Evil One did not carry him off, but entering into his body, tormented him in so furious a manner, that the poor man had no rest night or day. In his agony he repeated without ceasing the words "Wouë! Wouë!"

Every one was aware that he called upon Wouël to help him, but the difficulty was where to find that holy man who had been so unjustly banished by false accusation.

It so happened that at this very period the saint had embarked in a vessel which was to convey him back to his own country, but being wrecked on the coast of Gaul, an angel visited him, and desired him to go and finish his days at Nôtre Dame de Soissons. He obeyed, and scarcely had he arrived, when he was entreated to afford relief to the possessed man. His prayers soon drove the devil from his hold, and the man was delivered from his power; but not content with this, Wouël resolved to seek the enemy in

his cave. Accordingly, accompanied by twelve individuals of the convent, all in a state of grace, he advanced towards the spot, being himself the thirteenth. The Devil, nothing doubting that he should gain a victim, instantly rushed from his hiding place and pounced upon the holy man: instead however of succeeding in overpowering him, he found his own strength gone, and fell at the feet of Wouël a captive. The saint lost no time, but hurled him to the very bottom of the river Aisne, where his prayers imprisoned him beneath the Tour Lardier, afterwards called La Tour du Diable.

Wouël then, anxious to keep a strict eye on a prisoner of such importance, resolved to take up his abode in the tower, where he remained till the end of his life. The Father of Ill was not, however, tranquil in his watery dungeon, but from time to time revolted, and, by his efforts to escape, the tower became the theatre of struggles and combats worthy of St. Anthony. One stormy night, when all was dark and gloomy, and the wind howled fearfully round the old tower, while the waves of the Aisne were troubled with unusual violence, the saint sat reading at his desk, where he had been for many hours. Sleep surprised him, and at length his head fell on his clasped hands, and he became unconscious of all

around him. It was then that the rest of the inhabitants of Soissons were suddenly awaked by a savage howl, and many of them, rushing to their casements, beheld an appalling sight. The whole river seemed on fire, the high tower sent forth tongues of flame, which darted into the black clouds above it: on the topmost turret stood a tall dark figure tossing to and fro a burning torch, and leaping and shouting amongst the flames.

It appeared certain that the pious Wouël must fall a prey to the wicked designs of his enemy, when he was suddenly seen, by the fire-light, on the tower, struggling with the foe, who had nearly overcome him, when a bright flash illumined the whole sky, and an angel appeared hovering, with shining wings, over the building. The angel, descending quickly, caught the saint from amidst the burning ruins at the moment that part of the turret fell on which the devil stood; he was precipitated once more into the abyss, and Woël found himself seated in a bower of fragrant flowers and shrubs, in an island of the river, the waters flowing gently at his feet; day breaking with a flood of golden light, the flames of the tower were extinguished, and nothing was heard but a hoarse roar beneath to tell that the Evil-one was again a captive.

Every year since then, long after the death of the holy man, but always on the anniversary, the chaplain of the abbey read from the top of the Tour Lardier the exorcism, which was used by Wouël to keep the devil in durance, and there he remained inert and conquered in his dismal and damp *oubliette.*

It was only in 1755 that a Jansenist bishop, holding in contempt these observances, and much to the scandal of the monks of Nôtre Dame and the religious people of Soissons, suppressed the ceremony altogether. As might be expected, the devil, no longer kept in awe, recommenced his old practices, and was soon reinstated in the Rue de Montrevers.

Very shortly after this, a young pupil of the college was missing for several days, and no doubt was entertained that he had become the prey of the *designing one.* He had been seen to enter the fatal street, but not to return from it! Terror was at its height, the town was up in arms, not an old woman could keep in her house, not a mother but locked up her son, when the object of all this anxiety made his appearance to the amazement of every one. His clothes were torn it is true, but he said it was with brambles in the woods, where he had been wandering; his lips were black, but he confessed

to having indulged in blackberries and plums; and the only consequences which resulted from the event were a sound whipping which the young hero received for having played truant.

Nothing more was said about the devil from that time, and if he remained in the Rue Montrevers, he kept himself quiet till the great revolution, when he no doubt took his revenge. At that period disappeared the little *bâton* of St. Wouël, preserved in the treasures of Nôtre Dame, which had the virtue of extinguishing fire. On the 5th of February, the day consecrated to the memory of the saint, it was customary to perform a solemn promenade in the interior of the abbey, and make the sign of the cross with this relic near all the chimneys, in order to charm them against fire.

## CHAPTER VII.

Reims.—Cathedral.—Roman tomb.—Streets of Reims.—L'Ane Rayé.—Porte de Mars.—Streets.—Barbâtre.—Archbishopric.—Jeanne d'Arc.—Tapestry.—Walks.—Tawdry houses.—Choice of an hotel.—Caves and hills of Epernay.

HAVING seen all that interested us in Soissons, we continued our journey to Reims, which had been to us a great object of attraction, and after a dusty drive of fourteen leagues, were rejoiced to enter the ancient and renowned city where the kings of France received their crowns from the earliest period of Christianity.

Almost immediately on our arrival we hurried to the famous cathedral, having chosen an hotel as near as possible to it, intending, as we did, to make its aisles our principal domicile during our stay. We saw enough at the first glance to convince us that there was an endless store of interest in the magnificent towers covered with figures to the very top, the forest of spires elaborately ornamented, the fretted doors and glowing windows. Happily an immense number of statues still fill their original niches, though

thousands were no doubt destroyed; the riches, in this particular, of Reims cannot, however, be exhausted, as it would have taken years of revolution to sweep away all. The principal portal is not supported by pillars—all are niches, filled with figures in rows and lines—small and great, their canopies forming a kind of zigzag capital, as it were, to each,—to the topmost pinnacle ranges on ranges of figures — bishops, priests, saints, and angels—till the pyramid of the great front is finished by a single statue.

The gorgeous appearance this creates, and the extraordinary variety produced, cannot be expressed. All round the building, in every direction the same magnificent aspect is presented—all is solemn, grand, and rich; all is executed in the highest style of ornamental art; all is graceful, delicate, finished, and elaborate, yet the whole is full of majesty and boldness. The mind is filled with wonder at the perseverance which could devote so much time to adorn every nook and corner to such advantage; the eye is dazzled in tracing the exquisite patterns of the open galleries, the buttresses, the finials and crockets, the canopies and couvres. Part of the walls are encrusted with groups of the most grotesque description; many of the figures have been destroyed, but countless are those which

remain. At one door are colossal statues of St. Nicaise, Sainte Eutrope his sister, with angels; at another are St. Remi, angels, and Clovis; above are demons and sinners mocking the martyrdom of St. Nicaise and the miracles of St. Remi. A series of small figures represent the resurrection; others, souls ferried over a stream by demons or angels—souls led in chains by devils *ad infinitum*. It is said that a century was passed in adorning this splendid and elaborate building, and it would take almost as long to trace all the groups which cover it.

The interior is amazingly vast and grand, immensely long, of enormous width, the pillars and arches stupendous, the painted glass magnificent, and the form of the windows exquisite; their numbers extraordinary and their colours gorgeous. A lantern of rich glass extends along the whole of the aisles and the choir—at the back of the choir is an outer series still finer, and the whole expanse is one rainbow of the most glorious hues. The great rose, however, eclipses all the rest by its excelling radiance; molten rubies, emeralds, and sapphires seem glowing through the rich stone work, and when the setting sun shines full upon that window it is impossible to conceive anything so lustrous and so splendid. Beneath this beautiful rose is a

line of small pointed arches, filled with painted glass of equal gorgeousness, representing a row of crowned kings in regal robes of crimson purple and gold; and all below, from that height to the very floor, the wall is covered with niches, filled with delicately wrought figures, all perfect and all of the most exquisite symmetry. The pointed door, which rises in the midst of this incrustation, is adorned in the same way, and surmounted by a smaller rose window, which does not yield in brilliancy to the large upper one, and altogether the magnificence of this part of the cathedral is unrivalled.

A singularly bad taste induced the authorities at the time of the coronation of Charles X. to daub the bases and capitals of the majestic pillars with yellow ochre,—intended to represent gold,—and to paint the fine roof blue with yellow stars!

If anything could destroy the grandeur of the *coup d'œil* on entering, this piece of barbarism would; but fortunately there are so many beauties to observe, and the eye is so enchanted by the colours of the gorgeous windows, that at first it passes unobserved. It is not improbable that in early times painting and gilding might have been adopted, as they are still to be traced in some antique chapels and on statues; but the rich ultramarine and the pure gold then employed made

quite another effect, and answered to the gorgeous adornments of the rest of the sacred edifices.

We were struck with a peculiarity which is rarely observed in other churches, namely, three rows of stone steps for seats, against the wall, entirely surrounding the interior: spaces are also left at the bases of the pillars to serve for the same purpose: it must have had an imposing effect when the whole of these were occupied by splendidly dressed persons, witnesses of the ceremony of the *sacre:* above these seats are marks of holes where, no doubt, supports were placed for tapestry on great occasions.

The only tomb remaining is one of Roman construction, quite perfect and a great treasure. It is of white marble, and is called the tomb of Jovinus, the Roman consul: the inscription on it is,

Flav. Val. Jovino Rem. Cos. Ab. V. C. CIↃ CXX.

It stood formerly in the church of St. Nicaise, now destroyed. It represents a lion hunt, symbolical of a victory, gained by Jovinus over the Germans. All the imperial family are said to be represented. Valentinian I. on horseback, pierces the lion. Beside him is Valerius Severus, accompanied by young Gratian clothed in a consul's

mantle which had been conferred on him at Amiens. Valentius appears on foot farther off, a slave in a Phrygian cap holds his horse. The general on horseback near Valentinian is Jovinus.

This is an explanation given by the learned, but it is by no means satisfactory; a child and female figures, both very conspicuous, being entirely unaccounted for. The sculpture is very fine, and the grouping admirable, the marble of fine texture and colour, and the whole monument a precious specimen of art.

The streets of Reims are all new and the houses also; the promenades, the gates, the buildings, all are new, and look as if just finished; the pavement is new, but the worst we had met with since our feet were tortured at St. Omer. All our hopes of antique houses and streets seemed to be at once destroyed, all our ideas of one of the oldest towns in France put to flight, and it was only by dint of perseverance that we discovered that there really existed some few specimens of antiquity in the midst of so much modern improvement. Some names of streets told tales of times gone by, and here and there a suspicious-looking corner held out hopes of old world discoveries.

We made our way from one end of the town to the other, through immensely wide and tole-

rably clean streets, to the remains of the once powerful and stupendous church of St. Remi, very little of which still exists, and what there is now, rising from a heap of ruins and undergoing repair. Roman arches and capitals tell of the antiquity of the building, and their height and size denote its former importance; the Hôtel Dieu adjoins it, and is a vast and handsome fabric. The tomb of St. Remi is a restoration or rather imitation of the ancient one.

Scarcely a reminiscence exists of Joan of Arc; in the square opposite the cathedral is an inn called La Maison Rouge, where may be read this inscription.

"L'an 1429, au sacre de Charles VII. dans cette hôtellerie, nommée alors l'Ane rayé, le père et la mère de Jeanne d'Arc ont été logés et défrayés par le conseil de ville."

In the Rue de Tambour the façade is still seen of a house which once formed part of the palace of the Counts of Champagne; it is much ornamented with large carved figures, playing on various instruments of music, harp, violin, bagpipe, and tabour, and the mouldings are fine.

In the place of the Hôtel de Ville which is a handsome square is l'Hôtel de Joyeuse, or rather a house on its site, for scarcely anything of the original remains.

Inscribed on an old house in the Rue de Cères, called Le Long-Vétû, is this sentence :—

" Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Ministre d'Etat sous Louis XIV. est né dans cette maison le 29 Août 1619."

Many of the long wide streets are built on arcades of wood which have replaced those of stone which were formerly used, and the ranges of shops beneath have a peculiar appearance unlike any other town we had seen. The Rue de la Couture is one of the most remarkable, from its extreme width and length ; it leads to the grand promenades, which are very extensive and agreeable, well laid out, open, and fine.

The ancient fossés of the town are planted with avenues of trees, and a very pretty range of lower walks is thus formed beneath the outer range. Built into a part of the walls, but still conspicuous from the promenade, is a high triumphal arch of Roman construction, called La Porte de Mars: erected by the Rémois, in honour of Cæsar and Augustus, when Agrippa, governor in Gaul, made great military roads which passed by this town. This arch served as a gate till 1544, when a new one being made, it was built into the ramparts. Several times since it has disappeared under dilapidations, but in 1812 it was rescued

once more, and can now be clearly seen, but merely as forming a surface of the wall.

It presents two arches of equal height, flanking a central one of larger size, and higher: eight Corinthian coloumns adorn it. It was once covered with sculptured ornaments, now greatly defaced. One arch represented on its roof Romulus and Remus, and the she-wolf. On the right and left were seen Faustulus and Acca Laurentia, with trophies of arms and wreaths. The centre arch exhibits the twelve months of the year, similarly accompanied, and the third has Leda and her swan, with Cupid descending. It must have been a fine work of art in the days of its prosperity.

Some of the streets of Reims retain their singular names, such as *La Truie qui file; les Quatre Chats Grignans; de la Grue, du Singe, du Corbeau; Rue des Morts, des Gueux*, &c.; and the ancient designations of Roman times are not even yet discarded: such are *Rue de la Porte, Dieu-Lumière, de la Porte de Cérès.* In most of these exist a few houses on which some bas-reliefs may be discovered which have served for signs, but the only really beautiful and well-preserved house is one in the *Marché aux Blés*, of dark oak exquisitely carved on the whole façade: it is now a jeweller's shop, and is evidently kept up with

great care: nothing can be more elegant than the delicate woodwork, and, doubtless, this house must formerly have been of some consequence, but all tradition of it has passed away, like most of those connected with Reims, which ought to furnish so many.

The old name of *Barbâtre*, part inhabited by the *barbarians*, is still retained, but the Roman arch which divided it from the more refined quarter, and which was called the gate of Bacchus, and afterwards Porte Bazée, has disappeared. The Porte de Cérès is also gone, the name of which was changed to *Carcer*, in consequence of its becoming a prison. Legends say, that Ogier, the Dane, was confined here by Archbishop Turpin. The Porte de Vénus exists no longer, but there is still a street which bears the name of the Goddess.

On the whole, Reims, though it disappoints the antiquary, is a fine town, spacious, healthy, and clean. The people are obliging and industrious, and very considerable commerce is carried on there, particularly of merinos and all sort of woollen stuffs, besides an extensive trade in wines and brandies. The merchants have handsome country-houses in the town, enclosed in high walls, but generally possess others a little way in the country, where they seem to enjoy themselves

extremely. We heard, however, a good deal of grumbling at the little business that was doing, and discontent seemed to prevail: it appeared that the workmen were dissatisfied with their wages, and the merchants could not afford to employ so many as formerly.

There is but little appearance of devotion at Reims: we seldom saw any one in the cathedral but old women or children; and the sacristan, who showed us all that he could of the decayed glories of his church, complained that times were sadly changed since Cardinal Latil held sway here, and Charles X. and he planned the restoration of all its dignity. The dilapidated state of the fine archbishopric proved the truth of this; for nothing can be more dismal than its neglected walls, its pictures ruined by damp, its ornaments tarnished, and its gardens overgrown with weeds. The woman who takes care of the state chambers, now never required, echoed the regrets of the sacristan, and expressed a fear that evil times were coming, for all respect for the church was passed, all obedience laughed at, and the lower orders confessed no superiors anywhere, insolence and turbulence reigned supreme, and all respectability was departed from the youth of France. We grieved to hear this opinion from quiet well-intentioned people everywhere, and

more so to find it too well founded and clearly apparent as we advanced further into the country, where, instead of simplicity, we observed a saucy rudeness, instead of the urbanity supposed to be a national characteristic, a familiarity approaching to brutality, an unconcealed envy of all ranks and riches, a contempt for authority, and above all, a hatred of the English, totally undisguised.

Although religion does not seem to occupy the attention of the manufacturers of Reims, we were struck with the appearance of the booksellers' shops, where every second volume is a prayer-book. On entering one, we asked if they had any new publications, and the master hastened to bring one, which he assured us was *quite new:* we found it a pictorial edition of the Bible, in parts; and on declining it as a work of entertainment, he with great alacrity fetched another, which he said was *also* much in vogue: this we found was the *Philosophie* of M. de Lammenais; and our zealous friend seemed to think us hard to please, when we rejected this too. He said no more, but laid before us several well-bound books of *l'Imitation* and other devotional works. In fact, his whole shop seemed divided between philosophy and religion.

Reims, although it preserves no records or relics of Jeanne d'Arc, is in itself a sufficient

monument of her; and it is impossible here not to have the recollection of her and the monarch whom she restored, fresh in the mind. One imagines the entrance of Charles and his few faithful adherents, conducted by the inspired heroine to the cathedral, where he received his crown. It was Jeanne who presented him with the keys of the town, and who recited as she did so the following verses:—

Nôtre roi, prince et souverain seigneur,
Très chrétien nommé par excellence,
A qu'il est dû gloire, louange, honneur,
Subjection, amour et révérence;
Vôtre cité de Reims obéissance
Vous fait par moi, qui ci vous la présente,
Et de franc cœur, en vraie confidence
Les clefs des portes humblement vous présente.
Roi très puissant, mon souverain seigneur,
Reims très-ancienne, par grande humilité,
Son cœur vous ouvre par excellent honneur
Vous promettant garder fidélité.

As soon as the king was crowned, she threw herself on her knees before him, the standard in her hand, and addressed to him these words, weeping as she spoke: "Great King, God has permitted that you should be crowned at Reims, in order that the whole earth should see that you are the veritable king, and he to whom this kingdom does of right belong.

There exists an engraving* of a piece of tapestry which formerly adorned the church of Reims, representing the entrance of the king into the town in 1429. The following lines are there preserved:

Par le conseil de Jehanne la Pucelle
Charles VII. en grand train fut mené
Jusques à Rheims, et vérité ne scelle
Qu'en ce dit lieu il ne fut couronné.

The king appears accompanied by the Dukes of Bourbon and Alençon, by his first *valet-de-chambre* bearing his cap, by his archers and *gardes-du-corps*, who all have on their *cottes-d'armes* the name of "Charles," with no other devise. Jeanne, bearing the standard of France, opens the march, and conducts the monarch, preceded by trumpets and guards, who bear the *arquebuse* instead of the bow. The Duke de Lorraine and the Cardinal Duke de Bar, who had just before left the Burgundian and English parties, appear, having brought their troops to his assistance. The father and mother of Jeanne,†

* See Recueil de plusieurs Inscriptions pour les statues de Charles VII. et la Pucelle d'Orléans. Paris 1613—1768, in 4°.

† In a record of expences at Reims, the following items are set down:—"For defraying the charges for Jacques d'Arc, father of Jeanne, and his wife Isabella Romé, being in the town of Reims, lodged in a hostelry, where hung the sign of the *striped ass*, to the hostess of the same; also for those of several

with the king's baggage, follow a different route to the *cortège.* This engraving is very curious, particularly for costume.

In 1484, on a similar occasion, at one of the gates of the town, Charles VIII. was met by a beautiful young girl, with golden hair descending to her waist, wearing a hat of cloth-of-silver adorned with gold and flowers. She had for her robe a vestment of silk, the body and sleeves of which were of a superb azure blue. She descended from the height of the gate by a machine, and saluted and welcomed the king, presenting the keys, and reciting the same verses in his honour which La Pucelle had spoken.

The same ceremonial was observed on the entrance of Henry II. to be crowned in 1547. A theatre was erected before the gate, in which an ingenious contrivance presented a sun, which appeared to expand like a flower, and in the centre of a crimson heart within disclosed a young girl of nine or ten years of age, richly attired, who, advancing, offered the keys of the town to

princes and great lords, at the expence of the said inhabitants, in the year 1431, as follows:

"To Alix, widow of the late Raulin Morian, hostess of the Striped Ass, for the father of Jeanne la Pucelle, being in the company of the king when he was crowned in this town of Reims, ordered to be paid the sum of 24 *livres parisis.*" This is about equal to 480 francs of the present day.

the monarch, after which she reentered her heart, and was concealed by the rays.

It appears that on these occasions the kings of France and all their retinue were received at St. Remi, which they made their abode during their stay.

The walks beyond the town of Reims are not interesting, though at the time we were there the vines were in bloom, and extensive fields of scarlet poppies blazed in the sun, and every thing looked animated and cheerful: still there is not inequality enough in the ground to afford picturesque sites, and the heat in summer prevents the broad plain from being agreeable to walkers. The houses of the rich merchants of Reims are *very fine.* When the open gates permit a view, the stranger is much struck with their appearance, which, though not very elegant, displays great luxury of ornament. Porticoes of lilac and pink and blue painted wood are adorned with stripes of gold, with what seem gold fringes at the edges, like a tent; richly gilt pillars, finely carved, support this gorgeous entrance to marble steps; gilt railings enclose it; and the same style extends to the gardens, which are generally filled with choice flowers, and have enamelled and gilt temples in the midst of their fragrant alleys. As high brick walls conceal these treasures from the

common eye, the streets have a somewhat *triste* aspect; but the highly ornamented roofs and windows of these splendid edifices peering over indicate that the proprietor is a man of riches, if not of taste.

We quitted Reims for Epernay on a fitful day in June. The town below us shone out brilliantly in the gleams of the sun as we mounted the high hills covered with sweet-smelling vines, looking flourishing and full of promise. Large orchards border the route, and the whole country has a fertile and luxuriant aspect, improving in beauty the farther we left Reims behind: charming views open everywhere, and the beautiful wood of Montchenot, which we traversed for two leagues, brought us to Epernay, which is situated at the entrance of a smiling valley near the banks of the Marne, over which river there is a fine bridge.

We trusted to our driver to recommend us an hotel, as that at which we stopped was quite full, and were obliged to follow him through a great many uninviting streets before we arrived at his friend's, which, though very humble, appeared clean, and there we perforce remained, as he assured us it was the best in the town. Nothing could equal the civility of the rustics who attended us; but it was evident that

the friendship of their zealous supporter had sacrificed us. We rose at daybreak and began to explore, when we discovered that we had been carried to the very outskirts of the town, while, in the principal street, there was a very grand and spacious inn, whose sign of *De la France* told of the riches within. We lost no time however in vain regrets, but finding that Epernay had no beauties to offer beyond its neighbourhood, made up our minds to stay no longer than to see the church and the caves, which are famous as containing the celebrated Champagne wine which supplies all Europe, and extend their labyrinths to an incredible distance in the chalk hills. Three millions of bottles are always kept there, which remain three years before they are sent out, and are replaced immediately. It would take a whole day to walk to the end of these wonderful cellars, the boast of the whole country; but we thought it far more interesting to walk into the very midst of the beautiful vines themselves, which at that hour of the morning sent forth a perfume like orange flowers, scenting the air for miles round. We reached the highest hill above the town, and were rewarded for our toil by the most delightful prospects imaginable:—the fine valley, filled with picturesque looking buildings running partly

up the opposite hill, a circle of downs and woods and hills, covered with soft green vines rising above it, fields enamelled with flowers of every colour, striped with rich poppies and spotted with patches of the golden buttercup, interspersed with lilac and bright blue corn-flowers and shining with white daisies, the wheat waving its feathery blossoms in the fragrant air, and over all a canopy of stormy clouds of rich dark colours striving with the sun, whose rays every now and then pierced the gloom and touched the hills, valleys, and plains with glowing light.

We met several peasants and some bourgeoises from neighbouring villages; the latter seated in the most primitive manner on their led horses, with their wide aprons falling in drapery over their figures—all were hastening on to avoid the coming rain, and we found it necessary to follow their example. We accordingly descended into the town, and took refuge in the church, where we found a great deal to interest us, although but little of the antique building now remains. Some pillars at the entrance are of the time of the Renaissance, and show that the whole church must have been very elegant. The old windows remain, nearly entire, though it seems that a great many others were destroyed. There are sixteen, all curious and brilliant, remarkable and

valuable for their minute details of costume, and the quaint treatment of some of their subjects.

Thibault I., Count of Champagne, was buried here in 1090, as a slab in the wall indicates.

"Cy gist inhumé, 1090, Comte Thibault I., fils de Eudes II., Comte de Champagne, Fondateur de ceste Eglise en l'an 1032, et décédé 1037." Another stone sets forth that it was placed in memory of "Pierre Strozzi, Maréchal de France, Seigneur d'Epernay, tué au siège de Thionville, 20 Juin, 1558, et inhumé en cette église." His arms are engraved beneath this inscription.

Epernay and its church suffered fearfully during the contentions of the League, and what was then spared more recent violence has destroyed. The vines, however, flourish through all troubles, and are not only splendid in quality but beautiful to the eye. Indeed the whole drive from Epernay to Château Thierry, which was our next destination, is exquisite, constantly varied and picturesque, and glowing with abundance: corn, vines, and fruit heaping the earth with riches; gardens of roses and orchards of crimson cherries along the road, with every here and there pretty villas belonging to the wine-merchants peeping from their shrubberies, and prospects of extreme beauty opening from the summit of the hills, with the bright Marne winding at their feet.

The celebrated coteau of Aï, which produces the well-known sparkling Champagne, was pointed out to us at a little distance, and every hill we passed had its peculiar claim to attention; all in this neighbourhood yielding wine of superior kind.

Although this part of Champagne is so pleasing, the largest portion of the ci-devant province is arid and sterile, and deserves perhaps a harsh name, though that given it by the natives is somewhat coarse, *La Champagne pouilleuse.* Nothing can be more dreary than its wide uninterrupted plains, without a tree, subject to fogs, and exposed to every wind. The banks, however, of the Marne present many scenes as beautiful as those we now delighted in, and which continued as we re-entered the department of Aisne, and arrived at Château Thierry.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Château Thierry.—Charles Martel.—The Bonne.—The Heirs. — L'Embarras des Richesses. — Wedding at La Sirène. — Sleepy Driver. — La Ferté sous Jouarre. — Château de la Barre.—Acquaintance.—Approach to Provins.

NOTHING can be more delightful than the position of Château Thierry. It is as clean, cheerful, and handsome a town as can be seen in France, with one of the finest promenades on the banks of the Marne, bordered with several rows of fine trees. Above, on a great height, are the ruins of Charles Martel's castle, now scarcely more than a name, for its once gigantic walls and towers are levelled with the ground, and hay is made on their summits. The least destroyed of the towers is used as a [redacted] but all the rest is left open [redacted] for the towns-people. Unlike most places in France where every one may walk, it is clean, and the lower paths beneath the ruins well kept: the slopes are planted with vines and gardens, as at Coucy, and the whole is most agreeable.

The prospect beneath is very fine: spread out to a great extent is the plain on which the town is built, with rich meadows, green and fresh, bounded far off by high hills of beautiful form. On every side new scenes appear, and from the highest part of the castle a perfect panorama is laid out before the view.

We spent hour after hour on this fine eminence, venturing merely to peep down certain openings into fearful vaults and dark passages, most of them stopped up with rubbish, but indicating what still exists beneath, and whispering mysteriously of dungeons and *oubliettes.*

The most conspicuous object, wherever you gaze from the ruins, is the grand old tower of the once fortified church of St. Crepin. It is so huge, so menacing, so ogre-like, with its dark yawning windows, and rises up so abruptly from the mass of buildings at its feet, that its appearance is quite awful. It looks, in the dim light of evening, like a grim giant's shade watching the place of his former rapine and cruelty, and grinning with delight over his remembered violence. This tower might well represent the ambitious Charles Martel himself keeping guard, from his neighbouring Château of Chesmaux, over the youthful prisoner whom he kept in the inaccessible fortress above.

The story attached to Château Thierry, for all these castles have a strange history of crime and tyranny belonging to them, is as follows:—

On the death of Chilperic II. King of France, in 720, Charles Martel, *maire du palais*, resolved to make himself master of all; but the moment not being yet favourable, he permitted the young Thierry, a child of eight or nine years, to retain for a while the title of King. He, however, kept a strict watch over his own interests, and in order to secure them built a fortress for the young monarch in one of the most agreeable and delightful parts of his dominions, and close to his own castle.

He employed ten years in completing Château Thierry, which he named in honour of his captive, whom he surrounded with amusements, but at the same time with strong towers and walls, hemming him in, in a manner to render him securely his own, till the period arrived when he could throw off the mask and declare himself King.

Not a vestige of the original architecture of the castle is left, and in most parts the facing-stones are destroyed, so that the towers appear a rugged heap of ruins. At the entrance-gate the walls are less destroyed, and one massive tower, knobbed all over like the strange sea-

tower at Havre, presents a formidable appearance of strength in decay.

We had been, one day, loitering on the ruins for many hours, when the threatening aspect of the sky warned us to descend to the town, which we had scarcely done when the clouds burst with great violence, and we were obliged to run for shelter into the nearest place of refuge. This was a passage which appeared to lead to a tower: at the moment we entered a respectable-looking woman came up with her key in her hand, and with infinite civility invited us to accompany her upstairs to her domicile. We accepted her offer, and soon found ourselves in a neat little chamber, with a bed in a recess, and filled with good furniture; from this another smaller room opened, the shape of which left no doubt that we were in one of the ancient towers of entrance to the town. Our hostess insisted on our being seated on her pretty sofa, and apologised, needlessly, for the negligence of her apartments, observing that she had left them since morning to attend to a sick sister whom she took out to walk every day on the promenade.

In less than ten minutes she had told us her own history and that of all her family, and invited us to go with her to see her brother's beautiful pavilion, from whence she could show us one

of the finest views in the whole country. "My brother," she added, "has as good a house and the prettiest of any in the town; it was left to him by the same kind friend who left me *un morceau de pain*, and provided for us all. You see his portrait there; my brother has a copy of it, and we both prize it as you may suppose." We looked at the picture to which she directed our attention, which was not badly painted, and represented a benevolent-looking elderly man, rather smartly attired in a white waistcoat, and wearing a ring on his plump finger. We asked if he had left any family; to which she replied No, that he was *a priest*, and accounted for his dress by saying, that never having had a vocation for the church, but forced to it by his relations, after the Revolution he did not resume the habit, but lived single; that she was his *bonne* for many years, since her mother's death, who had been his *bonne* before; that he was much attached to her family, who were all in his service, and having no connexions of his own, when he died last year at the age of eighty, he had left everything to them. Her brother had the house which he had built, and finished only a twelvemonth before his death; all the furniture was new, the gardens in high order, the *statues* freshly painted and arranged by his own hand, his observatory just

completed and all ready for enjoyment, when his career was stopped to the eternal regret of her who narrated his story.

We could not refuse her earnest request to accompany her in the evening to see this pretty establishment, and as it turned out a beautiful afternoon we were well pleased with our walk, nor less so with the family to whom we were introduced.

We found a young man in a gardening dress, busy amongst his fine flowers and vegetables, in an extensive garden, which appeared very productive; here and there at the end of the alleys were placed flaring figures of shepherds and shepherdesses, carefully and brilliantly coloured, and so natural, as our friend, the sister, observed, that being of the size of life they might have deceived any one, except that the costumes they wore were more Arcadian than is usual amongst the inhabitants of Aisne. The garden commanded a very fine view of the country, and was in admirable order. Crossing the road, we entered the house, conducted by the young pale wife and crowing son and heir of our host, and here we were indeed surprised to see a beautiful little villa, every floor of which,—and there were three stories, — was fitted up with great taste and elegance with a suite of drawing-room, bed-

chamber, and boudoir, as elegant as any in Paris.

At the top of the house was the famed observatory or pavilion, of which they were all so proud, and from whence a really magnificent view was obtained of an immense extent of country, though I did not consider it so fine as from the castle ruins.

These good people seemed extremely embarrassed by their possessions; they kept no servants, and the wife said that she had an endless occupation in dusting and polishing her fine rooms. They slept in each of them alternately, and seemed to think it a duty to keep them aired. They appeared infinitely more at ease in their kitchen, where they begged us to rest a little while, and which was very clean and neat, and evidently their usual sitting-room. They had scullery and offices very complete besides, and plenty of conveniences for their use. They said they were constantly applied to by families who would willingly pay a good rent to be allowed to occupy this pretty complete house,—a perfect wonder in a country-town in France,—that several English people had tried to get it; but as they had plenty of money they had no intention of letting it. The young wife seemed thoroughly *ennuyée*, and very much fatigued with nursing her

enormous, strong, fine child; but it never seemed to occur to any of them that much trouble would be saved by engaging servants to help them. Perhaps when they are less new to their possessions, they will find the necessity of this arrangement, but as yet they have not recovered from the surprise of finding themselves gentlefolks all on a sudden.

We took leave of them, and were departing, when we were called back by a loud *bon-jour* from their parrot, which stood on a perch at the door, and had been a pet of the master's; the child crowed, laughed, and clapped its hands, the bird its wings, laughing and crowing in emulation. A cat and kitten, also old favourites, which we had observed on a comfortable cushion in the kitchen, appeared at the window, frisking and apparently enjoying the hubbub. Aunt, mother, and father seemed equally amused, and we left them evidently gratified at the pleasure we had taken in their whole *ménage*, and we sufficiently entertained at the liberal, though perhaps little judicious distribution of his property by M. Babil.

The old church of Château Thierry is curious, and unlike any other I ever saw: it is very massive, and resembles rather a fortress—as indeed it was in its time—than a place of peace. High flights of steps lead up to the entrances, as it is built on

the highest ground of the town; the great ogre-like tower is of enormous size and height, quite out of proportion to the rest of the building. It has been a good deal decorated, and some of the former ornamental carving still remains. On one side, at a great height, stand knights in armour in niches, and there are several pinnacles, elaborately carved, much injured. In the interior there are some singular twisted pillars round one of the chapels; but the whole is exceedingly defaced, and more remarkable for strength than beauty. There is nothing interesting in the town except the house where La Fontaine was born, in the Rue des Cordeliers.

There was great bustle in our hotel, la Sirène, and much apparent preparation for some important event; numerous bouquets were gathered from the beautiful and teeming rose garden belonging to the house, and we found that a wedding was toward. For two nights the violin ceased not, and every individual appeared given up to the entertainment of the time; for *la bourgeoise* gave the wedding supper to her two servants, *la fille* and the *garçon d'écurie*, who were happily united after a long courtship. We had ordered our carriage at eight o'clock in the morning, having engaged it as far as Provins, and agreed to sleep on the road: we requested to

have a *clean* and respectable driver, as that does not always happen, and our civil landlady bade us be quite at our ease, for the *garçon* she would give us was perfection. "*Il est très doux et ne répond jamais,*" she added,—a fact which we proved very soon, for he appeared resolved to keep up his character of never speaking, in spite of all the questions we put to him on the route.

Provided with a splendid bouquet of roses of all hues, crimson, white and red, and yellow, and one exquisite rose, called *le chapeau à trois cornes de Napoléon*, we set out in a tolerably comfortable little travelling carriage, with our young conductor. We had not gone far, when we discovered him to be in a profound sleep; and in spite of all our hints, he only roused himself to fall back again into his dreams. At last he fairly dropped his whip and reins, and we were obliged to insist on his waking up. He now confessed that he *was* drowsy, and uttered in a heavy tone, "*Quand on n'a pas dormi la nuit—allez!*" With these words he flogged his horse, and we continued our way through one of the most beautiful countries we had yet seen, by the banks of the Marne, which are here more varied than those of the Loire itself, wanting only its ruined châteaux to be superior in beauty.

At Charly the hills are very singular, being

covered with large blocks of grey rock, with luxuriant vines between: on each side of the road the charming vines continued, casting forth their delicious fragrance. We passed through several picturesque villages in the vines: Azy, evidently once a place of importance, from the remains of old walls every here and there; at Bonnay the church was covered with festoons of vines; at Creuttes nothing but old thick feudal-looking walls. Beyond this we came to pretty mansions built of party-coloured stone and pebbles, with gardens full of bright roses. We were continually mounting and descending hills above and beside the sparkling and winding river till we reached a suspension bridge which we crossed, and after enjoying a few miles more of charming scenery, entered the little town of La Ferté sous Jouarre.

There we stopped to breakfast, and to see what could be found of interest: we crossed three bridges over the winding Marne to the church, the tower of which is ancient, as are some of the pillars within, particularly two which support the stone holding the *eau benite.*

We remarked the dilapidated but venerable Château de la Barre, standing on an island: its *tourelles* shaded with large weeping willows which droop from the walls into the river. The view

above the town is very fine, the ancient but now unimportant town of Jouarre crowning the opposite height. La Ferté has a good port, and a considerable trade in mill-stones which, are considered of a superior quality.

We were joined at breakfast by an old gentleman who had been hovering about us for some time, evidently watching an opportunity to make acquaintance, which at last he did, telling us that he was delighted to meet English people, as he had spent much of his youth in England, having been educated at Aberdeen fifty years ago, and lived at Hampstead at other times. He was very gallant and attentive, and imagined that his English was as fresh as ever: he informed us, that his age was seventy-six, — "But," added he, with a satisfied air, in English,—"but I don't care." He lived at Montmirail hard by, the scene of one of Napoleon's victories, and tried to persuade us to go out of our route to pay him a visit. He saw us into our carriage with all the politeness of the old school, now so seldom met with in France as to be worthy of remark; and we went on, through a country declining in beauty to Coulommiers, which lies in a pretty valley, but is totally uninteresting in itself.

From hence to Provins the road is excellent,

but very ugly; in the cross-ways, where we had fine scenery, the roads were intolerably bad, and we found the absence of springs to our carriage anything but pleasant: the jolting seemed to have lulled our coachman to sleep then, and the smoothness had the like effect now, for he continued to sleep on, regardless of our remonstrances, never uttering a word since the memorable remark with which he started.

As we met with no sort of interruption, our sleepy guide contrived to convey us safely, but so frightful had the country become for several leagues that we were quite astonished at the change. Even when at a great distance, we beheld an extraordinary shaped tower which we hoped announced Provins; all was still, arid, and grey, and stony. On a sudden, as if starting out of the earth, appeared a mountain crowned with buildings of forms so strange, that we gazed in astonishment and uncertainty, unable to divine whether we had rocks or castles before our eyes.

We approached nearer and nearer, passed the steep mountain, left the *auld world* towers behind, and discovered beneath us a fine valley filled with houses, groves, and spires; a green and wooded hill beyond, and a smiling rich and beautiful prospect all round. We looked back,

and saw the desert close behind, and could hardly believe that so sudden an alteration could have taken place.

We descended the steep hill, and wound our way through a labyrinth of stony streets, till we came to what might seem a decent hotel, for our silent companion it appeared knew nothing of the town, where he had never been before. By dint of driving up and down, we at last got into the *Grande Rue*, and stopped at a very *grand* looking hotel, where we dismissed our taciturn sleepy coachman, and found ourselves well enough disposed of.

## CHAPTER IX.

Provins. — Grosse Tour. — Pâté aux Anglais. — Roses. — Gentico. — The Vault of Champagne. — Gace Brulé. — Fortifications. — Churches. — Bears. — Fairs. — Prodigal Son. — A Royal Purchase. — Dolmens. — Stone with hundred heads.

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Vantera-t-on toujours, Provins, sur toutes choses,
Tes parterres de pourpre et te moissons de roses ?
*Vie de St. Ayoul par Bernard Lelleron.*

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THE extraordinary and antique town of Provins is one of the most singular and mysterious-looking places that the "inquisitive traveller" can well stumble upon, in his unfrequented rambles in this almost forgotten nook of France — the small but fertile province of Brie, which hangs "like a rich jewel" on the ear of the wide district of the vine, more productive than beautiful, where the Counts of Champagne once held sway.

Provins lies concealed between its two heights, which are masked by a wide extent of plain country on either side, not permitting it to be seen till the very last moment. It is

hailed when tired of wandering along a monotonous road, through fields of rye, or by long dreary marshes for many leagues; one is suddenly startled by the apparition, beheld a moment, then vanishing and re-appearing again at intervals, of a gigantic tower, "such and so strange" as no other part of the world can exhibit, and begins to imagine that the *bizarre* form was merely some creature of the elements, and had no real existence; but it rises again and again till La Grosse Tour de César of Provins is revealed in unquestionable truth. Of stupendous proportions, it stands on the summit of a hill which overlooks a wide valley, and commands a broad extent of country in all directions for leagues. Its shape is an irregular square, flanked at each angle by a circular tower, which, after forming an upper chamber, is suddenly detached from the masonry, and changes itself into an arch, clinging to the mother tower by means of a flying buttress. The great frame then appears a perfect octagon till it reaches the ground, where it is hemmed in by a circling wall of extraordinary thickness and height, called *Le Pâté aux Anglais.*

This wondrous structure is surmounted, as well as its four satellites, by a pyramidal roof, within which are enclosed its halls and chambers, and chapels and dungeons. Near it, and only sur-

passëd in height and solidity by its giant-like neighbour, appears the strange dome of the great temple of St. Quiriace. These two look over the surrounding country, and seem to tell each other of the proceedings of all the wide world beyond, with their loud, deep, solemn voices echoing along the sky, and heard as they are seen, for an incredible distance.

Beneath these stupendous piles lie stretched, from hill to valley, and up the opposite height, the spires, towers, and roofs of the town they protect; and, though but few bells now reply to the summons of the solemn call above, yet there was a time when it would have been no easy matter to count the churches and convents where they swung.

At that period the war-cry of Champagne, *Passe avant le meillor*, was not heard in vain; and hundreds of banners waved in unison with the music of those bells, whose sound had led the warriors of Provins to the mass, heard for the last time previously to their departure for the Holy Wars, whence the few who returned, brought recollections that identified their native walls with the sacred city; and "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" was the salutation with which they greeted their beloved and long-left city, on the first sight of her towers and battlements.

Provins has ever since retained the honour which the pilgrims of the cross bestowed upon her, and is still said to bear some resemblance to the Holy City. Its appearance is so unlike anything else, that it may well be so, for even in its decay, and in spite of modern improvements, its original character has not yet departed from it. Though the eastern rose, which once rendered it famous amongst nations, is now but little cultivated, though its celebrated conserve is now but little valued, the flower is, fortunately for the lover of romance, not yet extinct; and it is no fable to assert, that nowhere has this exquisite rose so fine a perfume—nowhere has it so rich a crimson as in the gardens of its adoption at Provins.

It can hardly be an enthusiastic fancy which believes also that seldom are the notes of the nightingale heard in such perfection as in the thick groves which overhang the rose gardens surrounding the town, beneath the hanging gardens of the former convent of *Les Dames Cordelières*, whose establishment was so tendered by *Le Comte Chansonnier*, benefactor, poet, and warrior.

Thibault, the Trouvère, one of the first, whose poetry deserved to live and be recorded; he who encouraged, delighted in, and surrounded himself with the minstrels whose fame was known

throughout Europe; he who sang and fought, rebelled and bowed, before *la belle dame sans mercie*, of whom he was for years the slave and plaything, and whose passion has so puzzled the cool brains of philosophers, who cannot comprehend how one so wise and bold, and stubborn and resolved, could love on without hope, yet endure caprice and injustice, and contempt and anger, from a fair tyrant, in whose absence alone he dared assert his rights, but in whose presence he became a cipher;—he, it was, who brought from Palestine the red rose which he planted at Provins, and whose mystical beauties he sang so well.

This rose has not only furnished a subject to poets for ages, but was long an article of trade to the town of Provins. Large fields were cultivated beneath its walls, and the peasants came in crowds before sunrise to gather its blossoms, wet with dew, and carry them to the markets, whence the precious leaves, considered to possess valuable medicinal qualities, were distributed throughout France. One only garden, where it is found in its pure state, and where it is kept closely cut, like the best vines, is now found at Provins: there this beautiful treasure flourishes in security, and two pretty little girls and their mother are sufficient to collect the petals at early morning.

The garden, a corner of which is appropriated to this culture, belongs to M. Opoix, a great name in Provins; for the father of the present proprietor of this estate was a benefactor to his native town, an author, a scholar, and a man of genius. He it was who collected the mineral waters, of which Provins is justly proud, into their present fountain — built over them the temple where they spring, and made their virtues known to the *neighbouring* world. He it was who encouraged the failing trade of roses, and taught not only the art of forming the famous conserve, but recommended the *tinting* of *bonbons* with the rich colour which the flower yields; thus, in a country like France where sweetmeats have so much popularity, securing apparently a durable commerce to his *con-citoyens*. M. Opoix has been dead some months, having, after a useful life, spent in benevolent endeavours to benefit his fellow-creatures and advance the cause of science as well as encourage taste, quitted the world at the age of an hundred years. His garden, now, alas! neglected by his rich heir, who is said to possess few of the father's qualities, deserves a particular description, as indeed does every part of the intricate labyrinth of Count Thibault's town, for it is, even yet, a most delicious retreat. On one of the eminences

which rise from the valley, in passing a thick bocage, the ear is suddenly struck with the sounds of falling water—a gate invites to enter the enticing grove, and presently the stranger finds himself surrounded by fountains murmuring and rushing in all directions, some from rocks and some from jets—one whispering to another from a shaded walk near and at a distance; along alleys of acacia and honeysuckle the sound directs the way to Roman columns and tablets—antique busts and broken remnants of gothic pillars—new fountains meet the eye and ear at the end of every walk—still it is necessary to mount up; the terraces rise higher, the trees become thicker, and the plash of waters is deafened by the song of countless birds, who, undisturbed in their solitude, make the leafy covert vocal with an uninterrupted lay. Beneath a graceful temple is sheltered the mother fountain, from which the rest receive their being, and never was a more secluded or more beautiful spot. The perfume of the crimson rose is mixed with that of numerous other, less rare, but remarkably fine flowers, all of which grow in profusion and add to the charm of the scene. Before the spot is quitted, it is *de rigueur* to be provided with a choice bouquet and a handful of dried leaves, whose

odour is long retained, and fitly keeps the memory alive of the bower where they grew. The house situated in the centre of all this beauty is falling fast to decay; some servants,—peasants,—are its only inmates, and the permission to admit the inhabitants is now revoked, in consequence of the devastations committed amongst the objects of virtù: so that, as its present master cares but little for it, the whole place will in a few years, probably, disappear with the remaining antique houses in antique Provins. Revolutionary barbarity did all it could to destroy the wonders of the olden time in this part of the country, but it *could not be;* and it will require time yet before Provins can be made like a place of this world, and no longer give the impression to the traveller of having fallen upon a suddenly disenchanted city. What art or industry will be able to fill up the *leagues* of cavern, sculptured and pillared, which exist under the mountain on which the upper town is situated? —What force can level the piles of wall and tower and bastion, which for more than a league surround the vine-gardens and orchards which now flourish where houses, churches, and convents once stood? — Who shall demolish the *Tour de César*, or root up the *Druidical* looking columns of St. Quiriace and St. Croix, of St.

Ayoul, and of the Maison Forte des Brébans?—Who shall sound the depth of Le Puits Certain? or, more than all, who shall quiet the contentions of the learned as to whether this extraordinary mass of buildings, above and below ground, is indeed the Agendicum of Cæsar?

As much can be written for as against the probability of Provins, and not Sens, being the Roman town in question; and perhaps as likely is the conjecture that it was constructed by the Gauls. The inscription on a famous bell has caused great vexation and uneasiness, great quarreling and caviling amongst the learned; and the question is still undecided as to the meaning of the following lines: the bell was founded in 1280, and destroyed in 1437; but the tradition remains, and is thus rendered:—

Mon nom, c'est Guillemette:
J'ai été faite
Pour sonner la retraite
De la ville de Gentico.

Alas! that word *Gentico!*—still current amongst the common people, what *did* it, what *does* it mean? None can reply. As for the great bell of the great tower, whoever wishes to hear its undoubted history must ask the willing hospitality of the old lady who fills the office of ringer; for, the neighbouring church of St.

Quiriace having no bell, the ringing department is performed from the tower:—she will tell you that it is ridiculous to doubt that Cæsar himself built the tower, assisted by Louis XIV. in person, who put up the great clock; and as she boasts of being a personal friend of M. de Sommerard himself, who has presented her with a proof copy of his valuable work on the subject, it is impossible to quit the precincts unsatisfied. She pointed out to us a passage, in her precious volume, which records the date of her companion the bell, where may be read:

> En l'an quinze cent onze ayant été fondue,
> De Quiriace on me donna le nom:
> Je règne dans les airs, et chasse de la nue
> Diable, tonnerre, et grêle par mon son.

This lively old lady who shows the tower is warm in praise of her domicile—no dwelling was ever so warm, so dry, so healthy, or so gay as La Grosse Tour. She scarcely pities Louis d'Outremer, whose dungeon she points out; and, indeed, considering the usual places of confinement destined to captive princes, one can hardly commiserate the unfortunate monarch so much as many of his fellow sufferers. Louis de Débonnaire, for instance, had a much more dismal cell at Soissons, and Charles le Simple's *soupirail* at Peronne was damper and narrower: still, if in-

deed, as has been doubted, Louis d'Outremer was held in durance here as well as at Laon, the place is sad enough; perched high in the clouds, with a wide range of free country seen through the small window, on which his hands are supposed to have rested so frequently that the stones are worn smooth, the captive could behold all the rich territory of which he was deprived by the "*fel et enguignoux*," Count de Chartres, Thibault-le-Tricheur, whose shade still haunts the forest of Marchenois, tormented for the deceits and treachery with which he filled up the term of his life in this world. Let the traveller beware, in traversing le Blésois, lest, even now, he meet the fearful Count, with all his *meinie* out hunting in the air, and sweeping away to reach his Château of Bury, on the other side of the Loire! The Château of Montfrau, near where now stands the deserted Chambord, could once tell terrible histories of his apparition; but it is not necessary to leave the mountain of St. Quiriace to find horrible traditions. The *Trou du Chat* still yawns, and its devils are not yet laid—frightful noises are still heard in the nights of winter, and it was no longer ago than in 1818 that witches were at work within the fathomless caverns beneath the gloomy tower, where the diabolic monster which gives name to the low

arch of entrance has long loved to conceal itself.

Whether the portrait of this hideous creature may be recognised amongst the extraordinary forms which crawl along the foliage of the pillars of St. Croix, is not ascertained, but there is every probability that it is so, as no doubt it had more than once become visible to the monks of the abbey, whose prayers alone kept it in subjection. If this "bête" terrified the inhabitants of Provins, they had a fairer object to repose their thoughts upon in the person of Ste. Lucence, the wool-spinner, whose bones are supposed to repose beneath a tomb in the church of St. Quiriace. No one knows at what period this holy virgin lived, any more than that of the saint whose dome sheltered her ashes, but her miracles are incontestable, as well as the tradition which recounts that, being falsely accused of leading an irregular life, her apron was filled with red hot coals, which had no power to burn her or her garments. Formerly never was prayer addressed to her by a damsel of Provins ineffectual, but she has ceased to exercise her power at present. Of the palace in which the Counts of Champagne lived, and where the great poet Knight sang his lays and had them *engraved on the walls*, nothing remains but the outer part;

the building is now a college, where Thibault and his friend Gace Brulé tuned their lutes; all is now a blank, and few know anything of the fame which once resounded throughout Europe.

The Fête des Fous and the grotesque Fête de l'Asnon have also disappeared — no longer does the *Priest* dance along the nave of St. Quiriace with the prettiest girl in the parish — no more is the wine-cup filled and drained with *religious* fervour by the canons and their parishioners in the church amidst *solemn* dances and *sacred* songs. No longer to the young men and maidens of the town on the 1st of July, the festival of St. Thibault, are distributed bread, cherries, and tarts; no more cream cakes, called *flonnets*, are given by the bishop to the children of Provins; and more than all *to be regretted*, no *feast of roses* can now be beheld! This fête, which was called by the singular name of *Chancis* (a word which signifies in the dialect of the south of France *the return of the souls of the young*), partook of pagan rites and a recollection of the customs of the *Cours d'Amour*. It lasted, as the Fête Dieu does in some parts of the country, particularly at Troyes, for several Sundays, and its performances continued like the ancient mysteries still kept up in Bretagne. It began by a choir of young girls walking in procession before an assembled crowd,

and at intervals performing a dance in order to obtain a chaplet of *red roses with golden leaves*, which was awarded to her whose movements were considered the most graceful. The highest officer of each of the parishes, the clergy of the choir-children, the magistrates and dignitaries of the town, wore coronets of fir intermixed with flowers; but that of the *curé* was made of rose-buds with golden leaves. These garlands were made at the expense of the churchwarden on the eve of the fête, and by him an entertainment was offered to the fair aspirants for honour. The Sunday after this display a less graceful exhibition took place; climbing on a *soaped pole*, and *grinning*, as formerly at our fairs, formed the entertainments — the appropriate prize was a tart, worth two sous six deniers, and he who was ugliest and most disagreeable was the happy winner.

The Sunday which followed offered another contrast; a reward of a rose garland, a belt, and a purse, was awarded to her who sang the best — next came a procession in honour of the *goat with gilded horns*, accompanied with grotesque ceremonies and much wine-drinking. The dragon and the lizard of *les Rogations* followed, and for many years kept their ground, till the revolution at once destroyed them all, and they live now

only in the memory of the curious — having passed away like a tale that is told. Provins, of all other towns in France, can best furnish these memories, and every stone in its ancient streets has a legend and a history attached to it, which cannot but excite the interest of all lovers of antiquity.

A sad contrast to the grace and elegance of the poet and lover are the facts which cannot but recur of the cruelty and bigotry of the soldier and the fanatic. Thibault le Chansonnier not only brought with him from Palestine the beautiful rose which has lived to this day, in all its richness and glory, but a gift, more precious still at the period, though long since become worthless and forgotten — nothing less than a piece of the *true cross*, which was held as a priceless relic in the church of St. Croix, where it was deposited. Tired with the praises of his religious zeal, the lover of Queen Blanche gave way to the fury which animated all the true servants of the church, and, forgetting for the time the interests of his favourite city, he proclaimed a war of extermination against the heretics, in whose hands was the principal commerce of the country: in 1239 the too famous execution took place of one hundred and eighty-three Albigeois, "who all received death on the same day for the glory

of the holy church," while Count Thibault the Trouvère looked on and applauded, together with more than seven hundred thousand persons of both sexes! In one of the walls of the palace where Count Thibault resided, is still to be seen an embrasure with a stone seat on which cushions were accustomed to be placed, and which commands a view of the opposite hill; from this window the Count is said to have been favoured with a miraculous vision. During several nights he was aware of a "divine and luminous brightness" which rose over the southern part of the town; in the midst thereof appeared a lady of incomparable beauty, who with the point of a sword traced on the ground a mystic circle. Thibault recognized in the heavenly visitant the blessed St. Catherine, towards whom he had a peculiar devotion. He thence resolved to build a convent for holy virgins, and to place in it those of St. Claire who were still living. St. Claire, in accordance with his desires, sent him six of the most devout of her sisterhood, who remained in the palace of the Count for the space of four years till their convent was completed, when they took possession of it. Fountains and hanging gardens adorned the grounds surrounding the building, and those are still to be seen, though but little besides remains except the chapel, in

which a stone to the memory of the liberal founder might lately be seen. The house is now an asylum for aged men and a foundling hospital; but at this moment workmen fill the courts and the chambers, for the antique walls were giving way, the beautiful gallery had fallen, and it was necessary that modern art should replace the ancient fabric of the fair Cordelières. It still looks across the valley to the palace opposite, and the chapel bell still answers to the solemn voice of St. Quiriace in La Grosse Tour de Provins.

The following is a specimen of one of the poems of the lover of Blanche of Castille, which he introduces in the frequent form of a dialogue:

CHANSON OF COUNT THIBAULT OF CHAMPAGNE,

ADDRESSED TO PHILIP AUGUSTUS.

*Dialogue.*

Je vous demant
K'est devenu amors, &c.

PHILIP.

I ask you when and where
Is love fled hence away?
We seek him here and there,
But no where makes he stay.
His ancient pow'r is gone,
I marvel why or how;
Love is a dream alone,—
None speak of loving now.

Knights and ladies ask and sigh,
None have found a true reply.

THIBAULT.

Sire, you must know that love
  Will seek for love again,
And does from change remove,
  Where pleasure cannot reign.
He has no home with pride,
  Inconstancy he flies,
From falsehood turns aside,
  And in deceit he dies.
Knights are many who would fain
Love, but find no love again.

PHILIP.

I know that knights there be
  Who love, as erst of yore;
Their flames the fair ones see
  And make them still adore.
For crowds must worship long
  Whom, when near death they view,
They eye the trembling throng
  And change and choose anew:
What avails a life of care?
What can lovers but despair?

THIBAULT.

Sire, yet methinks that all
  Love best to roam and range,
Their boasted faith is small
  Still seeking fancies strange,

And though they ask for truth
They vary with the wind,
And waste their years of youth,
Still leaving love behind:
If true love we mourn and miss,
We should fly such sins as this.

PHILIP.

The fair who wisdom know
Will not too soon be won,
But if she mercy show
Should keep her faith to one.
But these fair enemies
Delight to prove their skill,
And care not for the prize
Except to torture still.
Me, Love's victim none shall see,
No fair tyrant's slave I 'll be!

THIBAULT.

Sire, in vain we may reprove them,
In this world we live to love them!

It is not alone la Grosse Tour at Provins which deserves attention; the whole of the higher town is surrounded by fortifications, which it takes several hours to visit. Innumerable towers of all shapes crowd along the walls, each offering features of interest. We were accompanied on our exploring visit by a young apprentice of the chief bookseller of Pro-

vins, who with great civility offered us his services for as long as we pleased, as he would be the best guide we could find, having been born in the upper town, which appears to be considered another country, and knowing every nook and corner of the ruins. He guided us well, and seemed to enjoy his holiday as much as we did: there was not a tower or tourelle which he did not seduce us into, and not a height, however dangerous, on which he did not climb; renewing the sports of his infancy when, as he told us, he and his mates used to amuse themselves with picking out the great stones of the walls, and rolling them down into the dry fosses beneath.

With him we visited the *Tour aux Engins*, where formerly all the machines of war were kept, the *Tour aux Pourceaux*, the *Pinacle*, the *Tournelle du Luxembourg*, *Tournelle aux Anglais*, *Tour de Gannes*, *Tour le Roi*, *Tour de César*, *Tour de St. Quiriace*, and numerous others. We peeped down the dark openings of the great and continuous caverns which run under the upper town, and are many of them sustained by rich sculptured pillars, and refreshed by fountains,—a subterranean city. Tradition says, that one extended as far as Vulaines, more than a league from Provins; but most of these

dangerous passes are now walled up, and their entrances are alone to be descried, except by venturous boys and determined antiquaries.

All the churches of Provins, though much injured, are curious and interesting. That of St. Croix, formerly called St. Laurent des Ponts, has undergone such successive modifications, that it is difficult to recognise its original form. Its architecture is from the thirteenth century to the seventeenth, and there is much in it which appears of Roman construction. An ornament frequently repeated on the walls is a heart pierced with darts: there is some fine carved wood remaining, and many of the pillars and capitals are of very primitive forms, and appear sufficiently old, their bases having sunk deep into the earth, as indeed the church itself seems to have done, which is the case with several others in this antique town. There are two twisted pillars in the body of the church of very remarkable shape, and their capitals are singularly grotesque, and a font of great antiquity, on which are sculptured fleurs de lis and dolphins.

St. Ayoul is also a most interesting monument, its pillars and portals and circular arches proving its extreme antiquity. But St. Quiri-

ace, called the Cathedral, in the higher town, even in its present state, is perhaps the most worthy of attention of all. Its fine dome must certainly have served as a temple of the Gauls; its antique columns and circular galleries and bold arches seem to have had a Roman architect, and its mysterious crypt, lately discovered, indicates an antiquity of the earliest date. The exterior does not answer to the inside; and except one door with zigzag ornaments and Roman capitals, there is nothing imposing in its appearance. There are neither painted windows, nor tombs, nor statues left, though once they were very rich, and a great image of St. Christopher was painted on the southern wall, and was sixteen feet high; a thick veil of whitewash has now entirely effaced his glories.

All the other famous churches have disappeared,—St. Thibault, St. Nicholas, St. Pierre, all the monasteries and convents. A *salle de dance* replaced Nôtre Dame du Val; the Abbey of St. Jacques, where pious pilgrims resorted, established by Count Thibault VII. in 1050, its celebrated terraces, gardens, library, and all its wondrous relics are swept away. Nothing is left of the monastery of the Jacobins where the heart of its founder was inhumed with so much

pomp, and the little mausoleum which enclosed it placed on the steps of the grand altar with this inscription on copper:

Ici gist le gantieu (gentil) cuer (cœur) le roi Tiebaut roi de Navarre, quens (comte) palatins de Champoigne et de Brie.

In 1791 the municipality solemnly transferred the heart of Thibault VII. and its mausoleum to the church of the hospital where his body had been placed; but in 1794, on the 7th of January, all the precious remains were dispersed and profaned by a furious mob. Fortunately, however, the mausoleum containing the heart had been concealed in time, and could not be found by the evil-minded populace, and on the 6th of October 1807 they were replaced with honour in the church of the hospital.

In former times a superstitious belief prevailed that the crystal globe which enclosed a stone heart, and was hung up over the monument, was efficacious in maladies of the eyes. The monks of the *Sainte Larme* encouraged this belief, and the people came in great confidence to rub their eyes on this holy relic. In the fountain of the Court of the Jacobins was a fountain of the Holy tear, the water of which cured all diseases of the eyes, and when the fountain happened to dry up, a monk went in the evening of the ap-

pointed day to the neighbouring river to draw water, which filled the well, and was found quite as serviceable.

There is amusement enough in Provins in its monuments, its ruins, and its fine promenades, to occupy a stranger for a long time. Although we had a good deal of wet weather we contrived to enjoy our stay there extremely, taking advantage of every gleam of sun and hour of genial warmth. We were standing with our guides on the platform of the Grosse Tour, one day, looking over the parapet at the extensive view round, when we were struck with four objects slowly mounting the high hill beyond the town. Their gait and manner were unlike those of such animals as one is accustomed to; and, as we looked, recollections of the antique time when strange beasts inhabited the neighbouring woods and, coming out of their dens, ravaged the country, flashed across our minds. These reveries were disturbed by an exclamation from the old lady of the tower, "Ah, les ours! les ours!" and pointing in the direction we were looking, we became aware that a party of bears were really quietly travelling along the road accompanied by their keepers, and several *jongleurs* with their monkeys. Nothing could be more appropriate to the scene, beheld from Count Thibault's castle,

and it only required a few knights, armed cap-a-pie, *chevauchant* along the road near them, to make the picture complete.

We were told that this assembly were going to a *concours* at la Maison Rouge, a lonely village through which we had passed on our way from Coulommiers, and that there was held a sort of fair for merchandise of all descriptions, which attracted every one in the country from all the towns and villages round. It occurred once in three years, and created great sensation in this part of Champagne.

No doubt this is all that remains of the great annual fair of Provins, once of so much importance. Provins was, in fact, in the thirteenth century one of the most flourishing cities of France. Its fairs, according to the poet Garin, were founded by Pepin le Bref, as well as others in Champagne, which were held in the highest esteem.

> Dix festes fist en France le pays,
> Une de Bar, deux en mit à Provins,
> L'autre de Troyes, la quinte de Lagny.

The cloth fabricated at Provins was considered of the first quality; in the middle ages it was cited for its excellence: the *ners de Provins* was placed at the side of *l'équarlate de Gand* and the *drap bleu de Nicole*. Its wines, now contemptu-

ously spoken of as poor Vins de Brie, were formerly highly prized. Garin, in one of his fabliaux, thus names them:

> En un chatel iert séjournans,
> Qui moult fu chiers et dépendans;
> Ainsis come seroit Provins,
> Si bevoit souvent de bons vins.

Its wheat was always looked upon as superior, as it is still, and certainly nothing can be finer or more delicate than its bread.

As an instance of the esteem in which the fairs of Provins were held, a specimen may be given from the MS. romance *des Lohérains*, in which the Prévôt de Metz is represented reproaching his son Hervis for not visiting the great fairs of Champagne *to buy merchandise*, rather than spending his time in hunting and hawking and the vain pleasure of the court.

> S'achaiterez et dou vair et dou gris,
> Des draps de Flandres, qui vendront à Provins
> Et des jvals qui vendront de Paris.

The young man objected, that he understood but little of merchandise, but his father insisting on his no longer wasting his time, he consented to go, resolving in his own mind to amuse himself as much as he could instead of devoting himself to business for which he had no taste.

As soon as Hervis arrived at Provins, he declined lodging with his uncles, who were already there, but engaged a magnificent hotel to himself, and gave instant orders that all the principal merchants who attended the fair should be invited to a banquet, where he entertained them with everything of the most costly description.

> Allez doner et pain et char et vin,
> Grues et jantes et maillars et perdris.

Every day he invited more guests, and increased his expenditure, till at the end of eight days he had spent a thousand marks of gold and silver.

His uncles now interfered, and represented to him how improper was this extravagance; but he answered gaily:

"Oh! you have only to tax *les vilains*. I will coin, if it becomes necessary, new money; but I am resolved to take the delight of my heart."

He then purchased an Arab horse, a falcon, two little hunting dogs, and a greyhound of great price. Possessed of these treasures he went out hunting, and returned with a good deal of game, which he showed to his uncle in triumph, and exclaimed:—

> And if the Lord of Paradise
> Should offer Chalon's town,
> Troyes and Nevers to be their price,
> And Provins of renown,

I would not sell my falcon muscadine,
My greyhound, nor this gallant steed of mine.

This promising youth was at last sent back to his father, who no doubt repented having urged him to go to a place where he found such opportunities of indulging his expensive tastes. He reproached him bitterly for his conduct, but afterwards sent him to the fair of Lagny, where it appears that, to complete his *ménage*, he bought Alix, the daughter of the King of Tyr, who had been carried off from her father and made a slave, and was now exposed for sale by the merchants to whom she belonged. Whether the father was more pleased with this last purchase does not appear; but it proves the reputation of these fairs of Champagne, which extended to all parts of the world, and attracted traders of every kind.

While in Bretagne all is Celtic, and in Provence all is Roman, the centre of France has lost many of its monuments of both races, having been the scene of such continued revolutions. Still there are traces of antiquity left sometimes in names, which the people do not comprehend, in altars, in tombs, and in stones.

In the neighbourhood of Provins are to be found numerous Celtic remains: at la Croix de Pierre a mound was opened, in which arms, instruments, and human bones were discovered; at

Bouchets, near the source of the Doué, in an immense plain, exist numerous Dolmens called *de Lisurs:* some are thrown down, but some are in the usual Druidical form of altars. There is a famous fountain at St. Par, which is still held in veneration, and its water is thought to be efficacious not only in curing maladies, but in procuring husbands and wives for those who drink and believe. A grotto of Sorrens is filled with treasure, and opens once a year during the reading of the gospel which describes the Passion; though it does not appear that any one has ever been fortunate enough to arrive at the spot at the proper moment. In this may be traced the treasures burnt by the Gauls with their criminals, the spoils consecrated to Mercury, and the gold which they cast into their sacred lakes.

Near the wooded summit of Montaiguillon is an enormous mass of flat rocks, laid one on the other, known throughout the country as the *stone with a hundred heads,* which inspires great awe amongst the country-people, who report that the finger of a child can move the largest of the blocks. These piles are often met with in France, and have doubtless been used as altars, whether so placed by the hand of man or by nature. There are others called *les Gros-grès,* and some designated *Pierres-Boutroutées.*

## CHAPTER X.

State of Champagne.—La Cigne de la Croix.—Count Thiebault and the soft Cheese.—La Reine Blanche.—Abelard.—Eloïse at Paraclete.—Love after Death.—Tomb of Eloïse.

LEAVING Provins, our route towards Troyes lay through a country less desolate than that on the side by which we had come; but still there was little to admire in the wide green marshes, where herds of cattle were feeding. We passed through several thick woods, and entered the department of Aube in Lower Champagne called, without reserve, *la Champagne Pouilleuse.*

The picture given by Dr. Patin of the rural habitations of this part of France is but little agreeable, but unfortunately too true, and would apply to many other extensive districts in other parts.

"The huts are generally about six or seven feet high, built on a damp soil without flooring;

the extent of their single room, including the oven, is not more than eighteen feet by fifteen. Here four or six, and sometimes ten, persons live and sleep; here they cook, here their clothes are thrown down, and here their salt meat is suspended. Their beds are boxes of planks, with a narrow opening by which they enter by means of a wooden bench; for they are placed so high up that otherwise there would be no means of reaching them. These huts are built of wood and plastered with mortar inside and out: they are roofed with thatch, which, projecting very far, entirely excludes both light and air. Many of them have no windows, and only an opening above the door to let in a little daylight. The stable is close by, joining the general room; the court before the house is filled with heaps of filth —an entire dunghill, receiving the water from the stable, the dirt from the house, and the rain which falls in abundance."

In some parts, however, of the department the villages present a striking contrast to this disgusting description. Nogent sur Seine, where we rested, is a clean agreeable little town, with charming promenades by the canal and river, and a pretty country round it. The Ile des Ecluses is a picturesque object between the two bridges,

and the falls occasioned by the mills have an animated effect.

The church has been very grand, and still preserves traces of its greatness. It was begun under Charles VI. and finished under Henry II. The tower is very high and graceful, surmounted by a colossal figure of St. Lawrence surrounded by an open gallery of remarkable lightness and beauty. All this part of the country is the scene of the frightful struggles between the French and English, which went on for so many years in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and which are so vividly described by Froissart. Nogent suffered much at this period, and was burnt and pillaged without mercy. In 1814 the horrors of war overtook it again; and after a furious struggle, in which several thousand men were killed, and a hundred and forty houses destroyed, General Bourmont was wounded and his people driven back: the enemy then got possession of the town, when, enraged to find little worth their trouble, they set fire to most of the principal buildings.

The irregularity of the streets is therefore easily accounted for, and the only surprise is how the fine church escaped at all such frequent and recent attacks. The punning names of several hotels amused us; that at which we stayed was

called la *Cigne* de la Croix, and the sign represented a swan holding a cross in its beak; another was called la Croix blanche *Olives*.

The whole town was in commotion for the procession of the Fête Dieu; but not an indication of piety was given by any individual that we saw at their doors laughing. The priests and little dressed-up children crowned with roses had it all to themselves as they paddled through the wet streets. We heard one sensible mother lamenting the encouragement given to the children's vanity, whose sole thought was of their white frocks, their garlands, and their long curls.

We were entertained at dinner, where the mutton was remarkably good, — a rare and singular fact, as, except here and at Provins, it is peculiarly tasteless and poor,—by a dish being brought us of *soft cheese*, for which Nogent is justly famed.

This then, doubtless, is the identical *soft cheese* which was thrown in the face of the chivalrous but too devoted lover of Queen Blanche of Castile by her young and impertinent son Robert d'Artois. This cheese, famous for so many ages, was the cause of the Count of Champagne quitting his imperious lady, and perhaps seeking a bride whose kindness should make him

forget all the insults and humiliation he had suffered for the sake of her whom he apostrophises in vain.

" And dost thou feel not one regret
That thus I slowly pine?—
It is not meet thou should'st forget
That all the blame is thine.
Ere long thy unrelenting eye
Will only gaze to see me die!"

No doubt it was this celebrated incident of the cheese that caused him to listen to the proposals made for uniting him to the beautiful Yolande, daughter of the Duke of Brittany, and made him appoint a day for the ceremony, when, accompanied by all her illustrious relatives, the fair bride-elect repaired to the Abbey de Val Secret. Long they waited, but the bridegroom came not; he was occupied reading a letter which had just reached him; and all was forgotten, even the insult of the cheese of Nogent, as he read what he considered a proof of her returning affection in the jealous commands she sent him. The letter ran thus:—

" Sire Thiébault de Champaigne, j'ai entendu que vous avez convenancé et promis prendre à femme la fille au Comte Perron de Bretaigne. Partant vous mande que, si ne voulez perdre

quan que vous avez au royaume de France, que vous ne le faites. Si cher que vous avez tout tant que amez au dit royaume, ne le faites pas. *La raison pourquoi vous savez bien.*"

On the road from Nogent is the village of Saint Aubin, on the little river Ardusson, where formerly stood the celebrated Abbey of Paraclete. Destroyed almost entirely during the revolution, it was bought by the comedian Morevel. Its ruins afterwards became the property of General Pajol, who on the ancient foundations constructed a modern edifice. From the midst of the rubbish the General rescued the coffin in which during eight centuries the remains of the unfortunate lovers had reposed. The sarcophagus which held it was found too heavy to be transported to Paris with the coffin, it was therefore restored and replaced in the vault, the entrance of which was closed; and, to mark the place, a votive column was erected over the spot. A manufactory was established there in 1822, which is now discontinued, to the great loss of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood; and it is the chimneys and roofs that attract the eye in passing, and direct the attention to the place which those celebrated and interesting characters have invested with such melancholy recollections.

Persecuted for his doctrines, which were those afterwards promulgated by Luther, Abelard,—a man superior to his age for the variety of his learning and his profound thinking,—retired to the domains of the Count of Champagne, where, by permission of Hatton, bishop of Troyes, he built, in 1123, in the neighbourhood of Nogent, a little chapel, formed of osiers and the branches of trees, which he dedicated to the Trinity, and called Paraclete. His reason for this was that his opinions respecting the Trinity had been condemned at the instance of St. Bernard. Followed into this retreat by numerous pupils, whom his fame attracted, the old persecutions were renewed against him; Abelard was obliged to abandon it, and left it to two of his friends, retiring himself to his native Brittany. In 1129, Eloïse, pursued by the same vengeance which had sought the ruin of Abelard, was driven from the convent of Argenteuil, of which she was abbess.* Moved by her misfortunes, Abelard abandoned to her and her fugitive community his solitude of Paraclete, where she sought refuge. Pope Innocent, in 1131, confirmed the establishment of this monastery, of which Eloïse was the first superior.

* Eloïse, with ten nuns, among whom were Agnes and Agatha, nieces of Abelard, wandered from village to village, reduced to implore charity.

Its oratory soon became enriched by valuable gifts, and before long Paraclete became the chief place of the order, and had several monasteries dependant on it.

## THE RETURN TO PARACLETE.

From Argenteuil's time-honoured fane
Driven forth a fugitive, forlorn,
When I beheld the world again,
And shared its pity and its scorn,

With my sad sisterhood I roved
Thro' weary paths unknown and rude;
Nor knew where he, so sadly loved,
Had fled to awful solitude.

With all my sorrows trembling still,
Fate, vainly lenient, bade us meet,
Resistless victims of its will!—
And led my steps to Paraclete.

Thine was the home that gave us rest,
To us thy holy cells resigned;
And there I strove to teach my breast
The calm its weakness could not find.

Since then, in deep regret and gloom,
Have twice ten years—all winter—fled,
And now—thou crav'st of me a tomb!
And now—I wake to see thee dead!

Oh, Abelard! why weep I now—
Hast *thou* not pass'd a life of care?
And could religion's power bestow
One charm to still *my* long despair!

Thou may'st, at last, repose in peace—
Contemn'd, pursued, opprest no more—
For thee the world's loud surges cease,
Thy bark has reach'd a tranquil shore.

And fame thy worth shall yet reward,
Great thro' all time thy name shall be;
While Eloïse thy dust shall guard,
And die, as she has lived—for thee!

On the death of her lover in 1142, which occurred at the Priory of St. Marcel de Châlons sur Saône, his body was by his own desire sent to the Abbess of Paraclete, by whom it was buried there.

Twenty years afterwards Eloïse died in this convent, and was buried in the same tomb; a magnificent mausoleum was erected to their memory. Tradition says that when the coffin of Abelard was opened, he opened his arms to receive his beloved.

## LOVE IN DEATH.

Twenty years! a hermit lone,
Clad with moisture, girt with stone,
Earth—dull earth, above, around,
By dark roots of ivy bound;
Fir and cypress bonds that coil
Through the slowly yielding soil,
As it swells to give them room
In their passage from the tomb,
Gath'ring life from that beneath
Which hath drunk the dew of death!

Twenty years! there came a voice,
Piercing thro' this hideous shade,
Giving to my soul its choice,
If at once immortal made,
'Twould above the stars rejoice,—
Or if shrunk, confined, and hid
By the heavy coffin lid,
Here it would abide and dare
Pangs the frame immured must bear,

Loathsome tortures round it cast,
Fearful pains that ling'ring last,
Stifling, wringing, pressing woes,
Knowing that they will not close
Till the lagging hour shall come,
When once more the yawning tomb
Opes its cavern foul and wide
To receive a vestal bride.

Twenty years! I 've waited well,
Here I chose—even here—to dwell,
Soul and body, in this cave,
Sentient, free—but yet a slave;
Yes, in faith, hope, power still free,
Slave to mem'ry and to thee!

Thou liv'dst on!—I knew the same
Spirit touched us with its flame,
That the same bright fount supplied
Both our beings from its tide,
All I hoped, believed, and taught,
Lived and flourish'd in thy thought;
What was dim to other's sight
Gleam'd to thee as purest light.

Once I hoped I could not die,
Leaving thee *to think* alone,
That each wondrous mystery
Must to each alike be known,
But my baffled human lore
Reach'd its goal and knew no more.

Twenty ling'ring years are gone
Since thou wert on earth alone,
Ev'ry thought for ever mine,
In the cell or at the shrine;
Ev'ry feeling thrilling yet,
Such as neither could forget,

When our cloister'd walls in vain
Held us both in parted pain.
Thou *could'st* live!—then not despair,
Such as hatred bade us share,
Penance, torture, varied ill,
None of these have power to kill;
And all science, skill, and power,
All we seek and toil to gain,
Leave but this when all is o'er,
That our wisdom is in vain;
All our wishes, struggles, schemes,
Are but meteors, shadows, dreams.—
Love alone—such love as ours
Gives the soul unwonted powers,
Courage to survive all harm,
Patience and enduring calm,
Thou to suffer life for me,
I to live in death for thee!

When, in 1792, the abbey of Paraclete was sold, the *notables* of Nogent went in procession

to carry away the remains of the lovers, which were placed in the church of St. Laurence. M. Senoir, conservateur of the Musée des Monuments Français, having obtained from the ministry permission to transport them to Paris, went to the church of Nogent with the magistrates of the town. The opening of the tomb took place in the presence of the sous-préfet of the department. The two bodies had been separated in the same tomb only by a leaden division. The original monument, erected over it at Paraclete, had been broken at Nogent in 1794, as well as the three figures representing the Trinity. One similar was made, and long formed the ornament of the Musée des Petits Augustins; it is now to be seen at Père la Chaise.

This tomb had been so placed that part of it was in the church, and part in the choir of the nuns, in order that they might go and pray on the grave of their founder without leaving their cloister. The first epitaph which was placed there was in honour of Eloïse alone. It is thus recorded by Courtalon:

> Hoc tumulo abbatissa jacet prudens Heloïssa
> Paracletum statuit, cum paracleto requiescit
> Gaudia sanctorum sua sunt, super alta polorum,
> Nos meritis precibusque suis exaltet ab imis.

Madame de Roucy, the last abbess, had the following inscription added:

Sub eodem marmore, jacent
Hujus monasterii
Conditor Petrus Abelardus
Et Abbatissa prima Heloïssa.
Olim studiis, ingenio, amore, infaustis nuptiis
Et poenitentia
Nunc æterna, quod speramus felicitate
Conjuncti.
Petrus obiit xx prima Aprilis 1142
Heloïssa xvii Maii 1163.
Curis Carolæ de Roucy Paracleti Abbatissæ
M.DCC.XXIX.

## CHAPTER XI.

Troyes.—Sign.—Streets.—Cathedral.—Indulgences.—Henry V. —Promenades.—The Bibliothécaire.—Route from Troyes to Auxerre.—Ervy.—St. Florentin.

THE town of Troyes, where we arrived after a tedious journey through an uninteresting country, struck us on entering as one of the most ancient we had seen in France since Rouen. Its narrow streets, gables, projecting fronts, striped and crossed houses,—all announced a place of great antiquity. The street in which our hotel was situated was one of the principal, called La Rue de Nôtre Dame, as it led to the church of that name, now destroyed. Nothing could be conceived more irregular than its aspect; a few high, modern-built houses amongst groups of low, peaked, blackened old ones, dilapidated churches, walls, and dark alleys leading to neighbouring streets,—ruin and desolation, age and ugliness forming the main features of the whole.

Opposite us was a café, which had for its sign, "Le Canard de Dieu!" To hear the opinion of its inhabitants one would imagine Troyes to be

as great and glorious as it once was, of as much importance, and as magnificent as Paris, and flourishing as when it was the capital of Champagne, and the residence of kings and counts.

At first the stranger, after his surprise and pleasure at the picturesque effect of some of the houses are past, looks about him in dismay to behold everywhere such heaps of rubbish, old stones, and walls, defaced piles of building, black and burnt looking façades, and stony, crooked streets; but, after a little reflection, resolving to give himself up to the spirit of discovery, he finds his toil repayed by all that remains in this extraordinary town.

This was our case, as, summoning courage the next morning after our arrival, we sallied forth to the cathedral, which is naturally the first object sought. We had heard a great deal of it, and were even told that it was the finest in this part of the country. We felt therefore disappointed in its outward appearance, for it is by no means on a magnificent scale, has but one tower much blackened and defaced, the whole of the front dreadfully injured by violence, though originally highly ornamented; and there is a poorness in the whole compared to many churches we had lately seen, which caused it to fall greatly short of our expectations.

The interior does not appear near so large as it is said to be, for it is vaunted as being inferior to few in France for extent. The form is good and regular, its galleries very rich and varied, and the arcades of the nave fine; but that which is most remarkable are the *groves* of painted windows, which decorate the whole building, one row above another, large and small, of all shapes and sizes—forming a most brilliant *ensemble*, although in execution as well as design they are inferior to Reims. Some of them date from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and are the richest and finest, but they are of all ages and dates, and the costumes they exhibit are very singular. The great rose appears pale and poor when compared to the gorgeous one at Reims; yet, when the sun is full on it, the yellow and orange tints come out very brilliantly.

A row of small painted windows, filling up the beautiful gallery which extends above the arches, and beneath the large windows all along the nave, is exquisite and unique. There is not a single tomb left, and the altars are covered with tinsel and trumpery.

People are said to be very devout at Troyes; and, to judge by the numerous old ladies we met trotting off with their books from church to church, it would seem to be the case, though,

as usual, no men are ever to be seen at prayers. There are eight parish churches still remaining of all the myriads which have been swept away, and the chief occupation in this dull town seems to be to go from one to another, saying, or seeming to say, a few aves and paters before a favourite shrine of each: probably these indefatigable devotees were qualifying themselves for the attainment of some of the *indulgences*, of which *printed papers* stuck on the walls announce the existence, under the customary conditions of repeating prayers before certain pictures in the different chapels.

It requires a long stay to see all these churches and those of the neighbouring villages: I never saw so many together, and in such bad condition in general, but in every one we found something to repay us.

In the church of St. Jean, Henry V. of England was married to the Princess Katherine, daughter of Charles VI. The exterior is dreadfully defaced, but there are some fine bits of architecture in the interior, and a tower of remarkable construction. A well is enclosed in the church, which furnishes water to that quarter of the town. There are immense caves beneath the church, formerly used as sepulchres.

The church of Sainte Madeleine is extremely

beautiful, with a screen of unique workmanship, unrivalled in its delicacy and grace, and many exquisite statues. St. Pantaleone is also handsome and very curious, being filled with carved figures of an excellent style. One statue of La Mater Dolorosa is full of expression and sad interest; a group of St. Peter weeping in a cave is admirable, and one of the three Maries extremely beautiful. They stand together in a rocky cavern, very well designed; but as if modern bad taste strove to do away with all that is imposing and solemn, on the summit of a rock above stands a red stuffed cock, in the act of crowing, his feathers and wings "in his habit as he lived." Nothing can be more mean and ludicrous than the effect this produces. The altars too are covered with dusty faded flowers, and little ends of dirty riband are tied to the lamps which hang round, and to the rails of the chapels.

There are many other churches which have been fine, but are in a sad state of ruin and desolation, almost knocked to pieces outside, and all their ornaments destroyed; some have curious *portails* and details, but they are hemmed in with mean and shabby houses, and are generally in very narrow streets, of which there is no want in Troyes.

St. Remi has some tolerably good pictures

and statues. St. Nicolas is curious from its formation: one entrance into the gallery is from the ramparts, and you descend into the body of the church by a fine flight of steps. There are some beautiful little statuettes in niches, which have been collected from other churches demolished at the revolution; and the pulpit is magnificent. The painted glass *en grisaille* is very remarkable. St. Nizier has some fine windows and good sculpture.

There are several curious *corners* of antique houses; one which is of the time of Charles VI., much dilapidated, in the Rue Champeaux, but it is difficult to discover these, as no one in Troyes knows or cares about the antiquities: we asked a baker in this street its name, which we did not see; he smiled, and ran over to his opposite neighbour to inquire: both had lived there long, but had never thought before of making themselves acquainted with it; when we discovered it written up at the corner, they appeared very much amused, and considered it quite "unique" that we should take any interest in the ruinous, old, carved, striped projecting house we were in search of. Another, much finer, of stone and extremely well preserved, has a charming little *tourelle*, which, while I stood to draw, attracted more attention than it ever appeared to have

done before. It is decorated with elegant carving, terminating in a graceful temple. As Charles VI. and his gorgeous queen frequently resided at Troyes, it is possible that this formed part of their palace.

The *boucheries* are celebrated here, and formerly renowned for the miraculous power exercised in favour of the butchers by St. Loup, who forbade any flies, on pain of excommunication, to approach the *halle* where the butchers held their meetings. The reason is tolerably evident; the market is almost subterranean, exceedingly cold and damp, and the flies penetrate there no more than they do in a cellar. A new *halle* has long been talked of, and the removal of this *famous* place would be a great advantage. It is formed of a series of low, tiled, pointed roofs, rising exactly in the centre of the best street, *La Grande Rue Nôtre Dame*, and is most unsightly to behold, even when, on the *Fête des Bouchers* at *St. Jean*, their patron, the market is decorated inside and out with festoons and garlands of green leaves. The meat so vaunted, and placed under such especial care, is very poor and insipid, and it would be difficult to pronounce, when served, whether it is beef, veal, or mutton. Wherever the vine abounds, other produce is usually neglected, and consequently the fruit of Troyes is of

a bad quality, nor are any of the viands which its continual market offers particularly good.

There are not many persons of large fortune in or about the town, but small proprietors abound, and comfortable houses, with good gardens and convenient dependences, are numerous. The day of fashion is the great market on Saturday; and then may be seen, hastening along the interminable *mails* which extend their green arcades entirely round the town, smart cabriolets, with smartly dressed damsels and Yankee-looking men, with straw hats and striped trousers, all bent on executing commissions at Troyes—purchasing new caps and bonnets, settling affairs of commerce, procuring necessaries for the week, &c. &c. Occasionally a *calèche*, and even a lady *en Amazone*, may be observed, but the sellers appear always more numerous than the buyers. A sea of *white caps* completely fills the principal street, and vociferous are the voices of all those engaged in disposing of their goods, or making a good bargain for them. Very few costumes are apparent; a cap or two worn by ancient *bonnes vielles mères*, may be observed, and they are very curious; standing up in stiff plaits behind, round a heavy *chignon*, and fanned out in front, they give a butterfly effect which, with a pretty face, could not fail to make a

sensation; unfortunately the young girls disdain the ancient mode, and are, therefore, undistinguished, and in general not particularly neat. The *bourgeoises* dress quite *à l'Anglaise*, and appear to assume a careless, *nonchalant*, English air and gait, which do not sit well on them. The most fashionable everywhere wear nothing but small cottage bonnets and shawls, some of the latter of handsome materials, as this is the land of *cashmeer*.

The promenades round the town are very fine and immensely extensive, in which, indeed, consists their charm, for no view whatever can be obtained from them, the ramparts closing them in on one side, and the houses of the proprietors on the other. They consist of long avenues of fine limes, the upper branches meeting and forming shady alleys, agreeable enough, and a great resource to the inhabitants, who seem to make it a point to visit their shades at every convenient moment; people of all trades passing on their errands from one quarter to the other by the *mails* rather than through the streets, even if it takes them considerably out of their way. This carelessness of time, and *laisser-aller* manner of getting through their work, is remarkable on all occasions. The French labourers do not weary themselves with ceaseless employment as

the artisans in England think it their duty to do. In the intervals of their work they lounge on the Boulevards arm in arm, joking and romping, and quite easy as to the lapse of time; going and returning to their occupations they take the pleasantest way, under the trees, and until they arrive at the very spot where they must begin to be in earnest they seem to have no care on the subject. Indeed, the slightest accident in the streets will at all times divert a workman from his business, and attract him to gaze and loiter, and how they contrive to get through what they are about seems a wonder. At Troyes, however, we observed a whole host quite in earnest, busily employed in forming the new canal which is to join the great canal of Burgundy—the boast, and justly so, of the whole country—which connects Paris with the Mediterranean, and conveys goods from town to town throughout the whole extent of country which intervenes. To assemble and speculate, leaning against the palisades which mask the proceedings, on the quay strewed with heaps of stone and rubbish, appeared the favourite resort of the *gaiety* of Troyes. A whole street of churches and convents, amongst them Nôtre Dame herself, has been swept away to leave a passage for the canal. Other religious houses, or rather their

walls, have been cleared off to give space for the new Prefecture and the handsome *Halles aux Blés* and *de Commerce*, at each end of the town. A few houses are distinguished by having flagstones before the door, generally bearing marks of having been the tombs of monks, with the traces of brasses visible on their surfaces. The ordinary pavement is sufficiently rugged, and the usual run of the streets extremely narrow and crowded, but by no means dirty nor, in general, slovenly. That of *Les Tanneries*, which might naturally be expected to be so, is kept very neat, and though, from the depth of dimness inside, the inhabitants are obliged to sit at their doors, there is no appearance of anything unclean or disgusting. So large, so extensive, and so *incalculably* old is Troyes, that it will require many years before it can be rebuilt into anything like a modern town; but when that event does take place, it will be a very good-looking place, always provided its churches are repaired and cleaned.

The *fête Dieu*, which here seems to last several Sundays, was carried on with as much pomp as a prudent sense of economy could permit. Long pieces of white *calico* were fastened up to the houses from street to street where the procession was to pass, and tied here and there in drapery. A great number of faded flowers and

green leaves were strewn about, and every window was full of heads, as well as the streets crowded with followers, as a party of children, crowned with roses, *petits anges* and *petites Madeleines*, advanced, preceding the priests and their holy cavalcade. There was, it must be confessed, less appearance of piety in the manner of regarding this solemn ceremony than might have been looked for in the religious town of Troyes, for the principal object seemed amusement, and "*Avez-vous vu la procession?*" was asked oftener and in a more lively tone than altogether comported with the occasion. However, the poor priests seemed to have quite enough to do, and to labour hard to restore the old order of things; though to see a single person fall on his knees now when the host passes, is a circumstance unknown, and the most that can be obtained is, that the lookers-on should raise their caps for a moment.

The good old Abbé who officiates at the *Bibliothèque Royale*, where there are upwards of fifty thousand volumes, ill enough kept, in a most ruinous apartment, has no great faith in the piety of his townsfolk. He is a lively, witty old man, and though far advanced in age, seems to preserve his native humour and quickness of perception to a remarkable degree. He is fond of re-

counting an anecdote, which is striking enough, relative to the three glorious days, in which his presence of mind and knowledge of human nature stood him in good stead. The library is collected into an ancient *salle*, the windows of which are adorned with curious painted glass, representing different epochs in the life of Henry IV., principally relating to his entrance into *conquered Troyes;* the *fleur de lis* of course figures in the arms, and amongst the emblems round; and as these symbols were precisely what gave offence to *les braves*, the *bibliothécaire* trembled for the precious morsels, preserved with much care, and rescued from former dangers, when he beheld a riotous party of *patriots* entering the court. They were led by a ruffian whom he knew of old as a *mauvais sujet*, and in their ranks were several *goddesses of liberty* whose aspect did not portend much protection to literature or the arts. He, however, repressed the terrors of his assistants, and hastening to the door threw it open, and welcomed the party as friends. "I was beginning," said he, "to be extremely uneasy about our valuable library and all our treasures, which you will now take charge of. I put them in your care in case of any disturbance, and am certain that you, Monsieur," addressing the chief, "who know the importance of these works, and how

proud our town should be of them, will prevent harm reaching them."

The *enlightened public* whom he addressed, astonished at this reception, were suddenly arrested in their inimical intentions; he ordered a large copy of the engravings of Napoleon's battles to be placed on the table, seats to be put for the ladies and gentlemen, and requested the brigand at their head to explain to them the meaning of the plates. Proud of the office, he fell into the snare, and exhibited his learning greatly to the delight of his auditors. Meantime a band of national guards, headed by a young artist of the town, arrived in great haste, having observed the direction taken by the first party, and it was only by great management and quickness that the Abbé contrived to prevent them from coming to blows. At length he succeeded in parting amicably with his visitors, and as soon as they were fairly gone, he set to work, with the assistance of the young painter, and concealed all the *fleurs de lis* with lamp-black, and thus they still remain; for, he adds, with peculiar meaning, "I thought it as well they should not reappear too soon, even now." It was fortunate he did so, for in due time, as he had anticipated, the *most thinking people* came back, finding that they had been cajoled, with a full intention of breaking every

obnoxious pane; but finding they were no longer adorned with *fleurs de lis*, they departed with cries of *Vive notre Bibliothécaire!* The *salle* would not have resisted much rough usage, for the walls and roof and flooring seemed tottering to their fall at every movement; the shelves are propped up with huge pieces of timber, and the whole has a most melancholy and dilapidated appearance.

The windows of many of the houses have a very antique and unpleasant mode of opening; they are, in fact, little less than *guillotines*, for except fastened up when the sash is raised, they come down with violence, threatening to demolish all beneath. To close the window half way is not therefore feasible, and to open it to its full extent is scarcely desirable in a street where noises of all sorts abound.

There are many villages round Troyes, amongst the sweet-smelling vines, which are agreeable enough to entice the prisoner within the closely pent-up town of Troyes, where he pants in vain for free air, to wander into their precincts, and not one of them but can repay him in some way or other. All possess a curious church, with a large quantity of painted glass, carvings, strange pictures, or curious ornaments. In one, that of St. Savine, the holy pilgrim-virgin is represented in the dress of the fif-

teenth century, with her staff and scrip, attended by a male companion, evidently on her way to the Holy Land. Her *aumonière*, which hangs to her side, seems tolerably well filled; her golden hair escapes from her pretty cap, and her purple robes are richly embroidered; her staff is of gold, and, altogether, she makes a very pleasing figure. This is represented on an antique carved chasse, which is kept with great care in the chapel dedicated to her. Another curiosity in this church is the stone coffin of St. Ragnegesile, Bishop of Troyes in the seventh century. It is enclosed in a finely-carved wooden case of the fifteenth century, and deserves to attract the notice of the antiquary. The charming little village of Les Noes, embosomed in vines and woods, has a legend attached to it, which adds to its beauty, and when the traveller pauses before La Croix de la Belle Fille, in the churchyard, he is told the following story:—

Henri I., surnamed the Liberal, Count of Brie and Champagne, had, like most other monarchs, some enemies, and though the father of his people, yet he could not escape the usual fate of princes. A conspiracy was formed for his assassination, and the ringleaders, three in number, met for consultation in

a shady grove of lindens, not far from the palace of their intended victim. Anne Musnier, a peasant girl of Les Noes, was passing by on her return from working in the vines, and hearing the sound of voices she paused for a moment, when to her horror she became aware that a plot was on foot to destroy the beloved lord of the domains of which she was a dependent. She heard that the time was come, the hour named as now striking from the great bell of the town when the accomplices were to meet, and Henri was to fall. Regardless of her own danger, and resolved at all hazards to attempt something to save the count, she rushed forward with loud cries, and being strong and robust, and animated with the spirit of a heroine, she struck one of the conspirators to the earth with the vine knife which she held in her hand. A violent struggle ensued; the other two ruffians attacked her furiously; but she contrived to keep them at bay, calling loudly all the time, until she had attracted the notice of the count's guards, who, hurrying to the spot, secured her assailants. The proofs of their conspiracy were found on them; they were executed, and the heroine rewarded by the grateful Henri, who ennobled her and all her lineage, giving the females of

her family the power of conferring nobility on their husbands—the privilege long continued, and is known as that of *Les Hoirs Musnier*. A chapel and a monastery, under the invocation of the Virgin, were established in the name of Anne Musnier by the count, who granted to her arms, *azure, with a golden lion*, to mark the lion-like courage which she had displayed.

The Hotel Mesgrigny, near the church of St. Pantaléone, is a fine building of the time of Louis XII., it is now a private house, and kept in good order: the carved ornaments in stone of baskets of flowers which cover the façade, are finely executed. The two immense towers, ending in a long leafy point, and the fine flight of steps leading to the principal entrance, are all worthy of attention. As the house is enclosed in high walls, it is only by chance that it is seen, should the great heavy portals be open. The towers have a very singular effect, seen from the open square before the church.

We quitted Troyes for Auxerre, whose beauties, we were told, would compensate for the long extent of ugly country we had passed, and indeed we had not travelled many leagues before we found an agreeable change. We skirted the fine forest of Othe, which once

covered a large space of country, from the Yonne to the gates of Troyes. This forest, as well as that of Der, was an important sojourn of the Druids, and here strange remains of their mysterious worship have been discovered from time to time. In this forest, on his return from Sens, Charlemagne and his knights rested for some time under the greenwood tree. It was well known to the English during the fatal wars of the fourteenth century, and a refuge for many of the Free Companies that desolated France from one end to the other.

The road is excellent the whole way; at Ervy, a little town in a charming situation, there is a delicious view, celebrated in the département. It is built on the site of its ancient castle, which must have occupied a most imposing position. The pretty river Armance flows at the foot of the high hill on which the tower stands, and nothing can be more pleasing than its gentle course through fertile valleys and smiling plains.

Soon after this, we reached St. Florentin, agreeably placed at the confluence of the Armance and Armançon, on the grand canal of Burgundy. At the pretty village of Avrolles, which was once Roman, we were delighted with the charming valleys of verdure which stretch

along for several leagues, and afford the finest pasture in the country. Near this we passed a château, which formerly belonged to Jolivet, valet-de-chambre of Louis XVI.; it is small, but very pretty and enjoyable.

The vines are here peculiarly beautiful, from growing on hills, and every inch of ground seemed teeming with abundance; instead of the interminable plains of Champagne, the coteaux of Burgundy were beginning with all the riches of their famous wines.

## CHAPTER XII.

Auxerre. — A quiet Lodging. — The Ogress. — Churches. — Chablis.—Marguérite de Bourgogne.—Tanlay.—Truce of God.—Famine.—Human Wolf.

At length, after a very pleasant journey, we reached the charming town of Auxerre, which deserves all the commendation that the French are too fond in general of lavishing without discrimination.

It is built in the centre of the famous vineyards which produce the wine bearing its name. The town is on the summit and slope of a hill rising from the banks of the broad and clear river Yonne, whose fine port is held in high esteem, and whose quays, planted with luxuriant trees, form delightful promenades. Shady islands of most picturesque form, covered with willows, poplars, acacias, and limes, make the river look as charming as the Thames at Twickenham: the numerous boats gliding on the transparent surface of the water, the woody and verdant banks,

handsome houses and long avenues, make a picture almost unrivalled for quiet beauty.

The Boulevards on the ancient walls which surround the town on three sides, are unique in the charming variety of prospects they present; they are kept with great neatness, have seats everywhere, and are open to the rich country on every side: the moats are filled with plantations of acacia, gardens, and vines, the fine old towers are covered with festoons of ivy; charming houses standing in the midst of glowing flowers, and all possessing pretty summer-houses with trellises covered with vines, look towards the promenades and enjoy their shade and the far perspective beyond.

Towers and spires of numerous churches appear above the houses, trees, and gardens, without number: the extreme irregularity of the ground allows of continual changes in the views, and in a long walk of half a day round this beautiful town the stranger finds it difficult to decide what part he prefers, and the artist cannot fix on a spot to choose, without difficulty, so inviting and so delicious do they all appear. The perfume of the vines was quite intoxicating when we arrived, brought out by the frequent showers and brilliant gleams of sun: before us fields of red poppies and waving corn spread far away

towards the hills crowned with rich woods, and our strolls beneath the fragrant rows of lindens,—where, however, we were obliged to shelter ourselves every quarter of an hour from violent rain,—were a great enjoyment, particularly appreciated after a long sojourn in the dark, gloomy, and pent-up city of Troyes, whose boasted Boulevards of enormous extent were like avenues within convent walls, beyond which there was no gazing and no escape.

We lodged at the magnificent Hôtel du Léopard on the quay, which, *soit dit en passant*, is much less expensive and far better served than any in Champagne or Burgundy, the people extremely civil and obliging, and all ordered in the best possible style. We had suffered so much, in every inn at which we had stopped, from the constant noise of *diligences*, carts, waggons, and travellers, setting out at all hours of the night, that we entreated not to be placed in apartments which looked as usual towards the stable-yard. All those next the river were already occupied, as Auxerre is a great thoroughfare and this hotel much frequented; we therefore chose rooms which were situated above a small back court bordered with large walnut-trees, where a vine clung in festoons round the windows, and everything seemed as quiet as a

cloister. The moon, that night of our arrival, was brilliant, and our little, tranquil, shady court looked quite monastic.

Scarcely, however, had day broke the next morning, when the loud shrill note of the bird of "lively din" woke us *en sursaut*, and, so persevering was his rejoicing, added to the chuckling of his feathered mates, that to sleep was impossible. This *charivari* was immediately followed by sounds so extraordinary, that we were long in comprehending them. A dozen little voices commenced a gabble which could only be equalled by the poultry who had set the example; it might, indeed, be the language of birds that we were listening to, like the merchant advised by these domestic animals. Presently a voice, loud, deep, and strong, joined the chorus, as it were Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians, and we could distinguish such words as these uttered in a forcible key,—"Eh bien, *Messieurs!* allons donc! ça va! c'est bien, amusez vous! comment donc! ne pleurez pas! ha! ha! ho! ho!"

As this mysterious noise increased instead of diminishing, we rose in despair, and, inquiring of our attendant what it could mean, were told that this part of the hotel was built in amongst other houses, and that our quiet court formed

a rural school-room, presided over by an old woman, whose coarse bass we had heard so far above the treble of her infant pupils: "ce sont des enfans tout petits—mais bien-petits," said our informant; adding, that they were sent there, "seulement pour débarasser leur parens pendant *la journée.*"

So this was our haven of rest—this the place we had *chosen*, and now we could get no other! As it was fortunately fine that day, we lost no time in leaving the ground clear to our imperative neighbour; but, alas! whenever it rained too hard for us to sally forth,—and her temper was not improved by the unpropitious weather,—the harsh sound of "Ho, ho! ha, ha! petit cochon! ha—le méchant!" alone varied the din below our windows, as the crying little victims either sat under the dripping trees, or were driven into the contiguous domicile of the ogress who guarded them.

We soon forgot our domestic troubles when we had climbed the steep streets, *within* the walls, to the cathedral and the rest of the churches of Auxerre, all of which are full of interest.

The cathedral, dedicated to St. Etienne, is a very venerable edifice, much injured, but possessing still great beauties. It is elaborately

ornamented, and is looked upon as a *chef d'œuvre* of the kind; the painted windows are very beautiful, in the style of those at Troyes, but less numerous. On the left of the altar, against a pillar of the lateral door of the choir, is a singular monument, representing an old man with a long beard praying in a pulpit: it is of white marble, and admirably executed. It is to the memory of Jacques Amyot, translator of Plutarch. Another, also fine, is in honour of Nicolas Colbert, bishop of Auxerre, brother of the minister of that name. In the chapel of the Virgin is the very curious and beautiful tomb of the Marshal and Admiral de Chastellux. The two warriors are lying in full armour on the marble, a bas-relief beneath them representing the battle of Cravant, of 1423, when the troops of Charles VII. defeated the English and Burgundians.

The colossal statue of St. Christopher, which was one of the most monstrous of those giants whose enormous proportions were exhibited in so many churches in France, was destroyed in 1768 by the chapter of Auxerre, as it was found that it only served as an object of entertainment to the common people, and in no wise assisted their devotion. It was twenty-nine feet high, one more than the famous St. Christopher of

Nôtre Dame, in Paris. The saint held the holy infant on his shoulders, and his neck was encircled by its legs. In his hand was a club thirty-two feet long, formed of the trunk of a tree: the people were accustomed to call this *sa petite badine.* Beneath his feet were represented waves filled with aquatic animals: beside him knelt a hermit, who bore the features of the sculptor, as the inscription on the base of this grotesque performance informed the beholder.

The church of St. Eusèbe, founded in 640, is a mixture of arabesque and Roman architecture, pleasing and picturesque, and its fine stone spire is a striking feature. That of St. Pierre was originally in the same style, and is well restored: the tower is a fine object: the pulpits of both are magnificently carved in wood.

St. Germain is all that remains of the ancient royal abbey founded in 623. The principal part is new, and the height and space alone indicate its former grandeur: it is remarkable for its double subterranean church, one crypt being beneath the other, and both dry, lofty, and of great extent, filled with tombs of saints, martyrs, bishops, and the Counts of Auxerre. The buildings of the abbey are now occupied by the Hôtel Dieu, one of the finest in France.

Its situation is beautiful, standing on an eminence, and overlooking the Yonne and its woody islands; it is surrounded by luxuriant gardens and vineyards, and is itself a magnificent pile. The lunatic asylum, at some distance from the town, is also a very fine establishment, of great extent, and conducted on principles which seem to have much success. In fact, seen in all directions, the town of Auxerre is pleasing in the extreme: its venerable churches, its Tour Gaillarde, now supporting the great clock, formerly part of the palace of the Dukes of Burgundy, its handsome quays, groves, boulevards and crowding vines, all combine to render it one of the most agreeable places, not only in Burgundy but in France.

We set out from this favourite sojourn for Tonnerre, in a neat little omnibus which held six persons. The road is *Macadamised*, and as good as any in England the whole way; the country is beautiful, and the coteaux are covered with short clustering vines of the greatest richness; their fresh green delightful to the eye, and their perfume quite delicious. We passed the famous growth of Chablis, whose white wines are known throughout Europe. The town is on the banks of the romantic little river Serain, and is embowered in trees of light foliage, and surround-

ed with its golden harvest, the prettiest secluded spot imaginable. Numerous villages, similarly situated, were scattered on our path, and every coteau we came to seemed to rival the last in rural beauty.

The ancient but now insignificant town of Tonnerre is agreeably situated in the midst of fertility on the decline of a hill, at the foot of which flows the Armançon. Its church of St. Pierre stands on a commanding height, and the way to it is so steep that it is almost a service of danger either to ascend or descend it: the view from the meadow ground in which it stands is very fine and singular, from commanding the whole town, with its irregular buildings, and the peculiarly shaped hills which hem it in. The only thing exciting interest is a fine tomb of Marguérite of Burgundy, sister-in-law of St. Louis, who endowed the hospital where her ashes repose. The charming figure of the benevolent princess lies on a couch covered with a drapery, plaited all round like an altar-cloth, so delicately is the marble worked. Her outer short robe *fleur-de-lisé*, the long inner one is covered with a beautiful little rose-shaped flower in relief exquisitely carved: she wears a coronet, and holds in her hand the charter which she granted to the hospital: her

face, which looks like a portrait, is very dignified and mild. An angel of charity is supporting her head and leaning over her.

This large hospital appears but little required, for we understood there were only two or three patients there at the time we visited it; and the neglected state of everything about it showed how seldom its wards were used. Another monument to be seen in the chapel of the hospital is that of the Marquis de Louvois, minister of war under Louis XIV. It is extremely magnificent, but does not possess the same simple charm as that of the amiable Sicilian princess.

We passed the château formerly possessed by the Marquis, on our way to Montbard, afterwards. It is one of the very few which still exist in France, and are so rarely to be met with on the high roads: its woods and parks are of enormous extent, and the building is antique and handsome. Ancy le Franc, as it is called, is in fact one of the great lions of this neighbourhood; but we were attracted from it to another château, which lies in an opposite direction.

A pretty drive of two leagues over a good road, but up very steep hills, brought us to the beautiful and secluded Château of Tanlay, one of

the few really fine habitations of the nobility in France, and which possesses great interest with Protestant Englishmen from its association with the illustrious and unfortunate family of Coligny, to whom this estate belonged in 1535. In the thirteenth century a fortress was constructed here by one of the sons of Louis le Gros. This fortress, swelling into a castle, was long occupied by the illustrious family of Courtenay, part of which race were possessors of the throne of Constantinople. The importance of Tanlay was very great in the fifteenth century. Charles le Téméraire looked upon it as one of the most consequence in Burgundy, and thought it worth his while to bribe the châtelan Aymé to keep it friendly to his cause. A female of the house of Montmorency inherited the possessions of the Courtenays, and brought this château, then dilapidated with frequent sieges, into the family of Coligny. D'Andelot, the younger brother of the Cardinal Odet de Châtillon, and the admiral, had it for his portion; but the friendship which subsisted between the brothers made the inheritance as much the residence of one as the other. The antique walls furnished materials to rebuild the castle in the style of *la Renaissance;* but the original foundations, too strong to be removed,

necessitated a degree of irregularity, which the taste of the time would have avoided.

In the midst of his new constructions, François d'Andelot was arrested by the religious wars, which allowed but little peaceable employment, and the large sums of money requisite to continue his plans were obliged to be devoted to other purposes. Much, however, of the present magnificent building was constructed under the direction of the brothers; and the tower, since called *De la Ligue*, offers many reminiscences of their time. One of the principal is a splendid chimney-piece, entirely uninjured, representing, admirably carved, the head of the admiral, covered with a plumed casque, with two sphinxes reposing on each side: the whole is in a delicately tinted yellow marble, and for boldness and grandeur is unrivalled, except by a similar piece of carving in a chamber adjoining, which is perhaps even more exquisitely executed.

The apartment, however, which is the most singular, is on the second story of the *Tour de la Ligue*, and deserves particular mention from the inexplicable peculiarities attached to it. It is a circular room, lighted by five windows, each having a deep embrasure, large enough to form

a small cabinet, from whence an agreeable view of the circling hills may be obtained. This is said to have been the favourite retreat of the Prince de Condé, the Colignys, and their Protestant friends; but it must have been rather for the purpose of entertainment than of serious business that they assembled, for it would appear to be rather an abode of gaiety and festivity than solemn consultation. All that now remains of the adornment of the place are the singular frescoes which appear on the vaulted ceiling, painted in a high style of art, but whether traced with a view to convey a compliment or a satire it is difficult now to decide. The scene represented is Olympus, and the deities wear the well-known features of the too famous Queen-mother, Catherine, and her renowned *bande* of beauties, accompanied by the chiefs of the party of Navarre. The Prince of Condé appears as Mars, and near him stands Venus, evidently a portrait, but one of the least pleasing as to face: the figure is very fine; the Conseiller de Birague, as Vulcan, looks furtively at the pair; a group of nymphs surround the Queen, amongst whom is conspicuous Mdlle. de Rouet, whose fatal charms drew the weak Prince Anthony of Navarre from his allegiance to his party and his noble-minded wife. He

stands behind her almost concealed. There is much beauty in the disposition of these groups of females; but the total absence of drapery, and the evidence of their being portraits taken from the life, gives rather an unpleasing as well as constrained air to some of the figures, which are nevertheless admirably painted, and in general well drawn. The Juno of the party, the Minerva, and Urania, alone appear covered with flowing robes; and these represent Marguérite de Valois as the Muse, Catherine as the Queen of all, and who the third may be is doubtful, —perhaps the modest Elizabeth, wife of Charles IX., or more likely, Claude de France. Marguérite is young and beautiful—"*belle et bien avisée, et de bonne grace,*" as she was described by Jeanne of Navarre to her son; but Catherine is the problem of the piece, for she is represented with two faces—one calm, dignified, yet soft, with a sweetness of expression very remarkable, and a benign character sufficiently at variance with that which the back of the head offers: it is masculine, coarse, malignant, and so well expressed, that it is easy to behold in its sinister scowl, hatred, perfidy, and cruelty. It is appalling in its truth, and, though partially in shade, is brought out with wonderful force, which makes it conspicuous at the second glance, the

first serving only to take in the pleasing aspect of this remarkable figure. Charles IX. stands near his mother—handsome, bold, and spirited: his emblems are those of Pluto. And here begins another mystery, which the unfortunate desire of some later proprietor to clean the walls renders impenetrable; for all the rest of the allegory is a confused mass of colour: tradition says, that the infernal regions opened at the feet of these deities, and numerous portraits were amongst the inhabitants of these abodes of darkness.

Strange allegories were often, at this period, produced both in painting and acting,—witness the play performed by the king and his brothers and friends, on the eve of the massacre of St. Bartholomew; but the clue to this is gone, and conjecture alone is left as to the meaning. The colours are bright and fresh, and the hand of a master is distinguishable in the touches: it is to be regretted that the style in which the subject is treated renders it too disagreeable to be generally exhibited; and in consequence, and from an averseness in the present possessor to destroy so singular a production, this beautiful chamber is left in a neglected state. A temporary ceiling of cloth might be easily placed over the offending pictures, and

the charming pavilion fitted up with books and ornaments of modern taste, as is the case with the pretty towers at Chenonceau, which delightful abode Tanlay resembles in many particulars. The other parts of the château are accommodated with everything that can be wished for in a comfortable dwelling-house; the choice of the furniture and decorations is in the best possible style—nothing gaudy, and no crowding —all simple, rich, and grand. Occasionally a fine vase or a piece of porcelain ornamented by the hand of Palizzi attracts the eye, and some excellent family portraits give additional value to the collection.

But to return to the three brothers. In the intervals of the desolating civil wars the cardinal, whose purse was more amply filled than those of the others, advanced to François large sums, to enable him to go on with their favourite château, and it advanced by degrees towards its completion. The proximity of Noyers, which belonged to the Prince of Condé, caused Tanlay to be the frequent rendezvous of the Protestant chiefs. There is even a current tradition that a subterranean way existed from one castle to the other, of which, however, there is no means of ascertaining the truth. Another tradition, more likely to be founded in fact, is

attached to a vineyard, which is pointed out on one of the coteaux to the north-east of the château, as that in which D'Andelot and the admiral concealed themselves, disguised as peasants, with their mattocks in their hands. The occasion was this:—shortly before the peace was concluded, on the 2d of March 1568, the admiral and his brother were advised of the orders transmitted by the Queen Mother to Marshal Tavannes, to surprise them and the Prince of Condé, who was then at Noyers. Tavannes, however, disapproving of this plan, was himself the means of saving the Protestant princes; for instead of causing the two thousand troops under his command to advance, he arrested their march, and sent, almost under the very glacis of Noyers, messengers who bore about them letters containing these words — "*Le cerf est dans les toiles, la chasse est préparée.*" These messengers were, as Tavannes had expected, taken prisoners and the prince, and the admiral who was also at Noyes, warned in time. He immediately returned by a private way to his brother at Tanlay. They made hasty preparations to quit Burgundy, when newer alarms obliged them to leave their castle in the disguise already mentioned. The next day they joined Condé, and with other gentlemen of the party escaped to

their friends on the banks of the Loire. War was now renewed with redoubled fury, and the three brothers separated; the cardinal took refuge in England, where he soon after perished, not without suspicion of poison administered by the emissaries of Catherine. The Great Condé fell at Jarnac, after performing miracles of valour. D'Andelot died at Saintes, the 27th of May 1569, poisoned by the same unerring hand, verifying what the Chancellor Birague had said, the "war would finish not by means of arms, but *cooks*." The admiral, now alone, returned but once to Tanlay after his brother's death. His subsequent fate is well known, but, perhaps, the circumstances of his second marriage are less so.

Coligny was sixty-two when a young and beautiful woman of high birth became devotedly attached to him, whom she looked upon as the greatest hero of the age. Her name was Jacqueline de Montbel, Countess d'Entremonts, widow of the Count du Bouchage, killed at the battle of St. Denis, in 1567. The admiral lost his wife the same year. Finding that he was free as well as herself, she offered him her hand immediately after the conclusion of the peace in 1570. No consideration could oppose her design. Her relation, the Duc de Savoie, violently

opposed this marriage, and confiscated in consequence her immense fortune. Careless of all, she escaped from Turin, proud, as she expressed herself, of being the Marcia of this second Cato. Their union was celebrated on the 21st of March 1571, only seventeen months before the cruel fate which overtook him she so much loved. She was at Châtillon when the hideous events of the *Mâtines de Paris* occurred; for, with all his confidence in the good faith of the Court, the admiral had entreated her to stay behind.

D'Andelot's sons had both fallen in battle, and Tanlay was the inheritance of his daughter Anne, who married the Marquis de Mirabeau. He it was who built the unique *petit château* which exists at the entrance of the great building.

This is, perhaps, one of the most beautiful specimens of art in the sixteenth century, and presents all the graces which characterised the *Renaissance*. The sculptures are exquisite, the friezes and pilasters extremely graceful, and every part finished with inimitable taste. The daughter of Mirabeau brought Tanlay as a dower to her husband, by whom it was at length sold to Michel Particelli, seigneur D'Hémery, in 1642.

D'Hémery was of obscure origin, but became sufficiently known as Controller-General of Finance under the ministry of Louis XIV.

He was, in fact, the precursor of Fouquet, and in many respects his model. Previously employed by Louis XIII. as treasurer of the king's plate, his probity had, with much apparent cause, been suspected, and his conduct was more than doubted in the affair of the *trousseau* of Henrietta of France, Queen of England. He was, however, not to be daunted; and in spite of his defeat, when he sought the position of *Maître des Comptes,* he contrived to become secretary of council, where his intelligence and quickness, and, above all, the extraordinary faculty he possessed in the memory of numbers, stood him in good stead. Cardinal Richelieu was the first to perceive the real capacity of D'Hémery, and to place it to its right use. He unhesitatingly named him as intendant of the army in the war for the succession of the Duchy of Mantua. To this place was attached a purely diplomatic mission, that of gaining over the Duke of Savoy from the alliance he had formed with Austria, in favour of Charles de Gonzaga, legitimate heir of the duchy.

This scheme failed; but the cardinal, notwithstanding the price he set upon its success, could not but acknowledge the activity, zeal, and dexterity with which D'Hémery had fulfilled his office; and as a mark of his satisfaction, he left him,

after the peace, as ambassador of France at Turin. He was also Intendant of Finance. The marriage contracted by D'Hémery, long before he had risen to these important employments, proves that his rank was considered of some consequence. His wife was Marie le Camus, daughter of a chancellor of state and Marie Colbert. In 1643 the regency of Anne of Austria began; Mazarin was at the head of affairs; the financial condition of the kingdom was deplorable. The President Bailleul, to whom the queen had confided the superintendence, not because of his talents, but that he was a mere creature devoted to her will, found himself unable to meet the exigencies arising from the maintenance of three armies, in Italy, in Catalonia, and in Alsace. Mazarin, therefore, judged it advisable to cover the nullity of Bailleul by giving him an intelligent adjunct: he chose D'Hémery, as a man full of expedients and fertile in fiscal inventions; and in 1646, when Bailleul retired, D'Hémery assumed his place, but from that time he had to support a constant opposition to the measures he proposed to raise taxes, in a manner as covert as possible, in proportion as the destitution of Government became more and more apparent. In all his struggles he was supported by Mazarin, until, when that minister

found that his nefarious projects and inhuman measures had raised a cry against him which no subterfuges could turn away, his timidity got the better of his bold intentions, and he saw no way of escape but by sacrificing D'Hémery, who was sent into retirement to his country residence at Tanlay. He was, it is true, afterwards recalled, but only to be again replaced; and from that time he did not quit his domain till his death in 1654.

Whether D'Hémery were more or less culpable, and how he acquired his enormous fortune, is not, however, here the question; he has left the mark of his golden hand on his residence of Tanlay, and thus deserves, if not an honourable one, at least some mention. The arts, at least, owe him some distinction, for of them he was a liberal encourager; he acted according to the advice of Voltaire, who says —

" Le riche est né pour beaucoup dépenser."

It was between the years 1643 and 1648 that D'Hémery completed, not only the great château begun by D'Andelot, but added the vast buildings attached to it, which made it one of the most magnificent habitations in France at the period, for there were few of the kind in the time which preceded the long and splendid reign of Louis XIV., when they became as universal as

they were gorgeous. D'Hémery confided to Le Muet, the most celebrated architect of his time, the task of realising his vast projects of construction. Le Muet, besides Tanlay, has left several remarkable edifices of his building; amongst others, those of Chavigni in Touraine, and Pont in Champagne, which latter was once possessed by Madame, mother of the emperor, and till lately belonged to the family of M. Casimir Perier. Anne of Austria chose Muet to finish Val de Grace, left unfinished by Mansard, and he erected several distinguished hotels in Paris.

Nothing can surpass the magnificence with which he has adorned Tanlay, its porticoes, pillars, courts, arcades; the sculptures and forms of all are delicate and grand in the extreme, and the famous *château d'eau*, at the extremity of the grand canal, which is of extraordinary length, is both magnificent and beautiful. On each side of this fine canal are avenues planted by D'Andelot: here Coligny and Condé have often walked, and a thousand recollections rise as the stranger wanders beneath these shades; the *surintendant* being the last person thought of, while he admires the ceaseless flow of waters, which rush and foam down the steps of the Doric temple before him. Everywhere the waters are of equal

magnitude; they leap from mouths into the *fosses* which surround the mansion, and keep the stream constantly running, as if a river flowed beside the walls. All is bright, sparkling, and grand inside and out; but there is nothing now of the superabundant ornament, which probably appeared at the time when the too-famous Marion Delorme condescended to share the dwelling of the rich financier, for whom she could afford no better praise than "*Ce gros homme est d'agréable conversation, et très propre.*" She, however, allowed him the honour of calling her, during her sojourn under his protection, "*Madame la Surintendante.*" The enormous expense she put him to is almost incredible; and there is a story of a necklace of such ruinous value, which she insisted on his presenting to her, that it exceeds in extravagance all recounted of the munificence or ostentation of a *millionaire*, resolved to excel all the nobles of the court in heaping riches on a woman, the most famous of her time for profligacy and profusion. The mansion at present belongs to the Marquis de Tanlay, who keeps it up with great propriety and splendour, and appears fond of the place, although less frequently there than previously to the loss of his wife, to whose memory he has erected a beautiful chapel in the best taste, on the site of the ancient one dedicated to Saint

Emilian. No one in that neighbourhood should neglect to visit this delightful abode, replete with recollections, and one of the finest residences in the kingdom.

While at Tonnerre, as we passed through its quiet deserted streets, and saw its simple market of fruit and vegetables, the recollection of its former importance formed a singular contrast to its present state, and the tranquillity around equally so to its situation in a time when, tradition says, it formerly dealt in merchandise too horrible to imagine, although probably too true.

In the tenth century France was desolated by the feuds of all her potentates, the Normans and Saracens ravaged the country, every petty lord was at war with his neighbour, and rapine and ruin stalked abroad. No remedy could be found for the constantly recurring evils which besieged the land, but by instituting a custom called the Truce of God, which obliged every man, of whatever rank, to discontinue his quarrel for four days in each week. All the productions of the earth were destroyed, no labour could go on, and a general famine was the consequence of this fearful state of things.

The country called *le pays Sénonais* suffered in particular: rich and poor equally felt the terrors of hunger, food of the most disgusting de-

scription was sought for with avidity and devoured, people fled into the woods, and there lived on roots and herbs; but at length these resources failing, they became savage, and lying in wait for travellers issued forth from their retreats and fell upon the wayfarers, whom they murdered, and with cannibal ferocity made the bodies their prey.

Many a wretched traveller, benighted on these now smiling and vine-covered hills, sought hospitality at a cottage, where he was received with apparent welcome, only to be sacrificed in the dead of night to the fury of the famine-wrung inmates.

Many a child was inveigled into these now flowery valleys, and disappeared for ever, having been killed with the same intent; the taste for human flesh appeared to have become general, the horror seemed to have ceased, and at the market of Tonnerre it was exposed for sale and eagerly purchased!

As if by deceiving the eye hunger could be satisfied, numbers of persons mixed chalk with the small quantity of flour, which was sold at more than its weight in gold, and endeavoured to be content with the appearance of bread. Death was seen in every shape, few were left to bury the dead: crime lorded it over misery,

humanity was expunged from the heart, and treachery and murder had for their object but one end, that of satiating a hideous appetite, which was shared with the wolves, who came in troops to take their part in the general desolation.

A wretched man, who was considered a pious hermit, had built himself a hut near a secluded church in a wood, and there he was long supposed to be miraculously supported: people resorted to him hoping to obtain his prayers; to all he offered hospitality, but at length it was discovered that many who had gone on pilgrimage to his cottage were never afterwards seen. Sinister reports began to spread—justice was awakened, and a party of its officers, repairing to the spot, on searching the abode of the supposed hermit, discovered no less than the heads of forty-eight of his victims, whose bodies this *loup-garou* had devoured.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Montbard.—The Château de Buffon.—Fontenai.—The Houris.—The English Bishop.—The Cloisters by Gas-light.—The Dangerous Valley.

In a little nook, on the confines of Champagne and Burgundy, in the department of Côte d'Or, is a small town, which though on the high road to Dijon, seldom detains travellers longer than to change horses. If, however, it should happen that they sleep at the principal inn, Le point du Jour, as we did, they will probably, in spite of the slovenly street by which they approach the bridge over the brawling river Brenne, be attracted by a very large house, with *porte cochère* stretching along the lower part of the Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville; and on inquiring who is its occupant, will be struck by a name famous throughout Europe, and then will begin to think it worth while to remember that they are in the town of *Montbard*, where lived and where died the great naturalist Buffon, and his *collaborateur*,

Daubenton. All that appeared flat and unprofitable in the insignificant place immediately puts on a different aspect.

It is no longer a matter of indifference that the little stream runs murmuring along between verdant and vine-covered hills, and bathes the foot of one more remarkable than its fellows; no longer is its course watched listlessly by the uninterested stranger—his glance now follows its windings with pleasure, as he marks on the summit of the mountain, which rises from its banks, a huge tower, of antique form, crowned with a diadem of singularly shaped turrets, and elevating itself far above the tops of a thick wood of pines and limes. Beneath he observes, gleaming through the thick foliage, walls, grey with age, terraces, where rows of orange-trees extend, roses and honeysuckles appearing here and there, buildings of various heights and sizes, until he becomes lost in the labyrinth of leaves which spread before him.

He now asks every particular of the little town, and learns that the soft sound of waters which he hears is caused by a fall in the river, where it joins the great canal of Burgundy, which connects *Paris and the Mediterranean.* The canal runs under the bed of the Brenne, and then throws its long, silvery arms along

the valley as far as the eye can reach. A vast basin, formed by the surrounding hills, encloses Montbard.

The view is circumscribed by this verdant wall, and only occasional openings permit the far off blue mountains of Burgundy to become visible. All the valley, and all up the steep coteaux, is cultivated chiefly with vines, which love a rocky soil. However, the wine is not so good here as at Tonnerre, where the vintages are famous, and where the ground is less rich. To the eye the vines are as good, and their growth is, indeed, beautiful; the broad, graceful leaves, and twining branches and tendrils, together with their tender green, and, above all, their intoxicating fragrance,—a softer, fresher perfume of orange flower,—cannot but delight the senses and please the view at all times. Masses of grey rock appear now and then amidst the green, and give a solemn aspect to the landscape.

On an enormous block of this stone was built, in ages remote and mysterious, a stupendous castle, frowning on the very summit of the mountain, and commanding all the country around. It might be of Roman construction originally, as is recorded, and have served as a retreat to the feudal lords of the troublous

times which succeeded. St. Louis might have dwelt there, for his name is given to one of the towers; at all events, there are walls enough tall, strong, and thick, to build a town, if it were possible to dislodge their masses from the earth.

Buffon found this treasure on his estate, and resolved to improve the happy accident, at the same time desiring to exercise his benevolence, and benefit the industrious poor around him. Hundreds of labourers were employed by him to arrange the grounds below these fine ruins in terraces and platforms; and under his eye, and directed by his taste, rose magnificent alleys, smiling gardens, secluded bowers, and open walks; avenues of larches, sycamore, acacias, ash, beech and lime, spread far over the space; the rugged mountain was transformed into an elegant series of promenades, adorned with statues, vases, and all that a pure and classic taste could imagine.

The tottering walls of the antique towers were repaired, the rubbish of years cleared away, and from stage to stage of La Grosse Tour de l'Aubespin the fine proportions of its beautiful *salles* brought forth, its windows relieved from these obstructions, and allowed to afford the magnificent views, which they could

present on all sides, its winding stairs renewed and made safe, and the whole fabric restored in all its original grandeur; the ruined walls planed and levelled where necessary; several of those most adapted were covered in, and chambers formed within them, without a stone being displaced or any change of form effected; the perfect, groined roofs still asserting their antiquity, and the thick walls telling the tale of their age.

Far beneath, at the last descent of his terraces, appears the fine habitation in which the creator of all these wonders resided, and where he received and entertained his numerous friends and guests; but it was not here that his valuable studies were carried on. In the most secluded part of his domain he chose an isolated tower, which he had fitted up with every precaution to exclude noise — double windows and thick doors. Here, surrounded by his books and free from interruption, the great philosopher of nature meditated, casting his eyes round on a peaceful and silent scene, and allowing his mind full scope. The principal part of his works were written in this retreat, and it would seem to be still held as sacred, few persons venturing to penetrate into the interior, being content to be told, "Here the great Buffon passed his hours

in study," as they look upwards and observe the walls of the pavilion.

It is extremely to be regretted that this relic is in a manner neglected. It is true that the windows have within a few years been repaired, but nothing more has been done, and the opportunity of regaining the *fauteuil* and desk, which were formerly used by Buffon, was allowed to escape. Nothing but bare walls remain; and gloomy, dirty, and sad looks the old tower, peeping out from the garlands of a magnificent species of small-leafed ivy which almost envelope it. No one now looks from the lattice where the philosopher gazed on the pleasing landscape spread out before him; the door is closed, and it appears that the key is lost, for, after several demands, the disappointed traveller will be told there is " Rien à voir, et il ne vaut pas la peine d'y entrer."

The general reproach which may be made to the Burgundians is an apathy and indifference to their treasures of this description, and an utter disregard of the beauties both of nature and art. Ask a peasant either in Champagne or Burgundy the name even of a street or church in his own town, and the first answer is invariably, " Mais, mon Dieu, je n'en sais rien. Ah! par exemple, ça peut être la rue de —— et l'église de ——."

Civility is not wanting when it is discovered that the stranger is sufficiently *original* to wish to find out something by which they set no store.

The present owner of the Château de Buffon is the widow of the son of the naturalist, who fell a victim to revolutionary madness during the Reign of Terror. La Comtesse is very much beloved in her neighbourhood, and justly so. She kindly permits all the respectable inhabitants to walk in her gardens, and they are, indeed, a general promenade to the town, as there is scarcely an inch of ground where they could make resort; besides, this permission is particularly valuable, and few are slow to take advantage of it; consequently there is little privacy left to the château itself, and the noise of village children without the *grilles*, and clatter of village occupation all round the dwelling, destroy the quiet which an English resident would require.

Not a marriage takes place but the whole of the guests immediately repair to the château, enter by the front entrance, climb the steps of the first terrace, and spread themselves over the grounds, talking and laughing, without a thought or care of disturbing the indulgent and kind-hearted mistress of the domain. Preceded by

their *violon*, the joyous party, all orange flowers and white ribands, mount from terrace to terrace to the *ancien château*; there they open their baskets of provisions and regale themselves, and there the dance and *petits jeux* commence till night falls, and they retrace their steps to the town below, which is as steep, stony, and slovenly as any French country town need be.

The château is very large and commodious, furnished very simply, clean and neat, and with bright-polished floors, *parqueté*. In the principal *salon* are three good pictures of Buffon, his wife, and Daubenton. Bronze figures of Jean Jacques and Voltaire adorn the chimney-piece, which is of the marble of Montbard, the discovery of which is due to Buffon himself. Though not remarkably fine, this marble is very beautifully variegated, and its colour is pleasing to the eye.

There is a tradition that the philosopher, with his usual benevolence, was anxious to reconcile the two most celebrated authors of their period, and invited Rousseau and Voltaire to meet at his house; they did not, however, agree, and parted much as they met, with no other result than having inspired with dignified pride the barber of Montbard, who, living till the age of ninety, boasted for many years after, that he had had the distinguished honour *de faire la*

*barbe* to all the three illustrious *savans* in one morning.

One circumstance cannot be doubted,—that the author of "Julie," when he beheld the cabinet in which Buffon studied, was seized with a fit of enthusiasm, and, prostrating himself on the threshold, kissed with the fervour of idolatry the steps so often pressed by the feet of him whom he reverenced as a deity. There is nothing to record this, but, in its stead, on the closed door may be deciphered a name less dear to the lovers of romance, but scarcely less known to the world; "Bergami, écuyer de la Reine d'Angleterre," wrote his *illustrious* name in pencil here!

The unfortunate queen of George IV. took up her temporary residence at the Point du Jour, at Montbard, on her way *to her trial and to death!*—a strange place enough for a princess to choose to remain in: for, without exception, Montbard, particularly that part of it in which the inn is situated, is the dirtiest town in this part of France, and the accommodations she could have had must have been poor enough.

But to return to the interior of the house,—there is a good billiard-room, and a long gallery, which forms one wing of the château, and is on a level with the raised terrace above; the walls

of both of these chambers are covered entirely with coloured engravings in narrow gilt frames, which touch each other, of the birds described in Buffon's great work on Natural History, and have a very pretty effect; the hues are all bright and the forms pleasing, and, as they were executed under the eye of the master, make an agreeable impression on the mind.

A small chamber thus ornamented, *in enamel*, would be very beautiful: why should not some of our *millionaires* adopt the fashion? Could there be a prettier boudoir than one thus adorned? The subjects could be varied at will, and the artists employed chosen by a tasteful patron, who might thus occupy numerous persons of talent *in a new way*.

Whoever has visited the chambers of the Hôtel de Buffon, will agree that the effect is charming. Less so is the prospect which the windows present on the side next the street, and it is difficult to coincide in opinion with the respectable housekeeper, who admires that part of the house most,—"Voilà qui est gaie! ça donne sur LA rue où on voiÿ* tout le monde; on ne s'ennuie pas;" the *monde* consisting in gentry who pass, driving carts, laden with coals, towards the canals; peasants in

* Burgundian pronunciation.

blouses carrying loads of different kinds, seldom picturesque, except, indeed, they appear with bundles of hay, intermixed with blue corn-flowers and poppies, which make huge garlands round the heads of the labouring women.

From the *salle à manger*, however, which is exactly opposite a street leading to the bridge, can be seen, above the tops of the houses, the green summit of a mount, crowned by a sort of shed or pavilion, formerly the retreat of a certain hermit, and, in later times, the abode of a solitaire, who amused his leisure by attending to the growth of silkworms, and had the honour of being a friend of Buffon's. The last proprietor appears to have been also a philanthropist, for he left the small piece of land, on the top of the hill, to the town for a pleasure-house for the people, who sometimes meet there to dance; his library and house he bequeathed to Montbard, which can now boast of a *bibliothèque publique*, certainly but little required and never resorted to, except by inquisitive travellers, who will there find some of the best modern works of poetry and the drama, some excellent engravings, and classical authors.

The church of Montbard is without interest, except from its position; the high spire appears

above the pine grove which surrounds the ancient castle, and is a charming object in the view. At the Revolution, the tomb which enclosed the ashes of Buffon was destroyed, the lead of his coffin melted into bullets, and his bones scattered. We must not trust ourselves to comment on such a deed; but the same hands that murdered his son might well have perpetrated it. It was said that the interesting and amiable young count was betrayed by a valet-de-chambre, who denounced him and his wife of sixteen, the niece of Daubenton. The latter, after passing a whole night in a cart, expecting to be led, at daybreak, to execution, after hearing of her husband's fate, and that of many of her friends, was suddenly delivered by one of those changes which saved the lives of thousands. She returned to Montbard, to find the mob in possession of her house; her furniture destroyed or dispersed; her pictures, her plate, all her cherished treasures gone; and she, but lately a bride, destitute. After a time restitution was made, to a certain extent, but the once princely fortune of one of the greatest men France has produced was dwindled to a trifle.

The statues which adorned those beautiful

walks were broken, the carvings defaced, the trees torn up, the flowers trampled down, and desolation reigned triumphant. By degrees, and in the course of years, the terraces, the orange-trees—which are remarkably fine—the groves, and walks, revived; but it would have required the fortune lost to do justice to this retreat, and make it what it was. One monument alone remains, and that is very interesting; namely, a small, slender column, standing exactly beneath the enormous tower which commands the surrounding hills. It was placed there by young De Buffon, during a short absence from home of his father; who, on his return, discovered with pleasure the tribute paid him by one so dear. The inscription is as follows:—

"Excelsæ turris humilis columna
Parenti suo filius Buffon. 1785."

It is unfortunate that the house should be placed so low as to prevent any sort of view being obtained from it, or indeed *of it*, for the ugly roofs of the surrounding houses entirely *mask* it from sight, and the terraces and immensely high trees close it in, and overshadow the whole building, which is kept in excellent repair, and has a handsome front next the

garden, but can never be wholly seen even from the terrace immediately opposite, half of the structure being beneath the spectator, who stands amongst the orange and myrtle trees, or sits beneath the gigantic acacias, which wave their graceful branches "in sign of worship" of the memory of him who planted them there.

Although now so insignificant, Montbard was once a place of great importance. Its *seigneurs* were the richest in Burgundy, and distinguished in all the expeditions of their time. They almost all fell in battle for their liege lords the dukes, who, in default of heirs, became possessed of their domains, and granted many privileges to the town. Hugues the Fourth, in the year 1230, granted the inhabitants a charter *de commune*, reserving for himself, in consequence of *want of money*, fifteen days' credit with the bakers and wine merchants, beyond which time they were not bound to supply him till he had paid his debts. Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, several times fixed his residence at Montbard, and there received his bride, Marguérite de Flandres, to whom the ladies of *l'Auxois* came to pay their devoirs, adorned and dressed in all the splendour of fashion. Twice the *Estats de Bourgogne* assembled here, in 1376 and 1388; and the *Edit de Montbard* fixed the

pound at sixteen ounces. The town and castle held out for the League, but were obliged to yield to the victorious arms of Henry IV. in 1590. Since that time, little mention is made of it in history, and the glory it obtained in becoming the abode of Buffon has effaced its former renown. The old gardener, who used to relate numerous anecdotes of the naturalist, is dead; he reached nearly the age of ninety, and was never weary of talking of the ancient glories of the place. His *daughter*, who remembers only the burial of M. de Buffon, has now the care of the flower-gardens, and, though abounding in zeal, has not, as she herself allows, *sufficient hands* to weed and water, and tend and dress the beds as they should be; therefore, more than half is left in all the simplicity of nature. The *jardin potager* is that which is most attended to: it is of immense extent and very productive; its grapes and wall fruit are of the finest flavour, and it is in general in tolerable order; but being much too large for the wants of its owner, the whole of the domain cannot but present an appearance of neglect and decay, however beautiful and venerable the trees, shrubs, and walls may be. Such as it is, however, by the liberality of the countess, it belongs quite as much to the town

as to herself, and is a real treasure in the country, and an object of extreme interest to all travellers in Burgundy.

During our stay at Montbard, to whose excellent countess and her society we were indebted for much attention and politeness, we accompanied some friends of her's to visit a family in the neighbourhood, who are remarkable in many ways; in the first, from their residence at the ancient abbey of Fontenai, next from their bearing the names of Mongolfier and Seguin, and lastly for their singular beauty.

The head of this family is son to the well-known Mongolfier, whose discoveries of the power of balloons have made his name familiar. He has a great many daughters and nieces, married and unmarried, all of whom live in his house, and each of whom is more or less beautiful. It is a sight to astonish a stranger to see the drawing-room, into which one is ushered, filled by degrees with a crowd of lovely girls, few of them above twenty, some with one infant, some with several, as pretty as their mothers, and to hear that all these are sisters and cousins: they all, it seems, marry relations, some so near as to startle English and Protestant ideas of propriety. One exquisitely lovely young woman—a perfect Houri, with dark eyes,

—for instance, was the wife of her uncle the brother of her mother and the father of her cousin, who was the wife of her brother, and thus her daughter and sister. This last was also as beautiful as can be conceived, and so young that when she produced her infant, it appeared almost a fable to consider her as a mother. Another of these nymphs was a widow, with a sweet melancholy expression in her magnificent dark eyes, quite enchanting. The youngest married sister-cousin entered the room with the only single one of the party, not so regularly handsome as the rest, but full of grace, vivacity, and brilliancy. She had a large straw hat, with a blue riband, such as is worn by peasants, thrown negligently over her bright hair and shading her face, which was all roses and smiles—her shape quite unconfined, as was the case with each, as pliable and waving as a dancing girl, her step like a dryad, her eye like a gazelle; in fact, as the whole party formed into line, and accompanied us through the aisles and cloisters of the abbey, I could not help thinking they looked like a band of young priestesses, chosen for their beauty to officiate at the shrine of some pagan deity, as they walked along with their arms entwined round each other, and the charming heads peered over the pretty shoulders,

while explanations of all the wonders of their domicile poured from their lips.

They all appeared to possess remarkable talent, some for drawing and painting, some for music and singing; and we were delighted, during our long visit, by the evidence given us of the latter accomplishment. One of the finest instruments, by Pepe, I ever heard, was touched with consummate skill by her whom I considered the most beautiful of this lovely community of aunt-mothers and wife-nieces.

We walked with them over their pretty romantic gardens in the depth of the valley where the abbey is situated; and as a group of them stood clinging to and seated carelessly by an ancient fountain, I never beheld so picturesque a sight, or forms so classical and poetical.

The charm of these goddesses of the place for a long time made us forget that our object in visiting Fontenai was particularly to see all that remained of the abbey, whose buildings now furnish chambers, in which M. Mongolfier has established a paper manufactory. At length we were able to observe the effect of the ruins themselves, and to separate from them the lovely beings of this world, whose presence so agreeably disturbed the monastic solitude. The arrival of some of the husband-uncles and bro-

thers, who are not, in outward appearance, distinguished from good-looking ordinary mortals, enabled us, by their kind guidance, to explore the wonders of the monastery, once so celebrated in Burgundy, so powerful and so extensive, and standing on the site of an establishment formed by the Druids, perhaps equally imposing, and of still greater power.

The Abbey of Fontenai, of the order of Cîteaux, was called the *second daughter* of the powerful monastery of Clairvaux. It was founded in 1118 by Bernard and Millon de Montbard in a spot called Chatilun, near a wondrous fountain, famous for the miracles performed there by a holy hermit, called Martin, who had chosen it for a retreat.

The rich bishop Evrard of Norwich was at this time forced to fly from England in consequence of the insubordination of the clergy under his care, and, quitting his diocese, he repaired to this secluded place, where he established his abode on a neighbouring hill, from whence he looked down on the rising convent at his feet. In a short time, the monks succeeded in exciting his interest, and, his religious zeal being roused, he undertook to assist them with money and advice. At his own charge he built for them a fine church,

of enormous dimensions. Pope Eugene III., accompanied by ten cardinals and eight bishops, and a great number of abbots, assisted, with St. Bernard, at the consecration of this building.

On Evrard's death, he was buried here in a magnificent monument in the centre of the choir; several other tombs of dukes and duchesses of Burgundy afterwards added to its splendour.

The abbey was governed by thirty-two regular abbots and thirteen *commendataires*. Numerous privileges were granted them by the Popes; amongst others, they had a singular right, which goes far to prove the turbulent state of their lives, namely, the permission *to fight amongst themselves*, and to be absolved for so doing.

They were declared exempt from excommunication, let what would be their crime, and permitted to wear the ring, mitre, and pastoral staff. Philippe le Hardi, although described as *rude chevaucheur et âpre chasseur*, exempted the abbot from furnishing *white bread* for his dogs when he hunted near the abbey.

Jean sans Peur permitted them to fortify the monastery, and Louis XII., in 1506, renewed the same privilege: this appeared necessary, as they were so frequently at war with their neighbours, the monks of Moutiers Saint Jean. In 1250 there were no less than three hundred monks.

Part of that which remains is said to be the *léproserie:* but the finest part is a council chamber, the roof and pillars of which are gorgeously beautiful: the convent kitchen is also fine, and the immense range of cloisters are unrivalled, except by that of St. Trophine, at Arles.

The church, now partly used as a coach-house and partly for manufacturing purposes, is of great extent, but has little of its ancient grandeur left. It was dedicated to St. Croix and St. Petronille and Hélène, as a tablet still seen on the wall sets forth. Numerous tombs of abbots pave the floor, amongst which that of St. Bernard himself, the great adversary of Abelard, is shown, much defaced.

The water of the miraculous fountain still flows on; our beautiful friends told us that they were very jealous of the paper-mills, which stole so much from their flower-garden, where their fountain was placed, that it seldom had enough to allow it to play in the picturesque manner they had planned. In the stream beyond are found trout of enormous size and excellent flavour.

Till the great Revolution, a community of monks still enjoyed this delicious retreat, surrounded by antique forests. Immense masses of grey rock are scattered over the hills, and rear

their venerable heads amongst the thick foliage: the pretty river runs sparkling on its winding way, through a rich romantic country, presenting every here and there delightful views of rural beauty. The walk through the woods to Montbard must be delicious in a dry summer, but in the winter the pretty inhabitants of Fontenai are indeed recluses; for it must be perfectly impossible to pass the roads, which are sufficiently rugged at all seasons, and must then be quite impracticable. The air is subject to violent changes; even in the hottest weather, when the day has been sultry, a sharp frost will come on at sunset, which makes a fire necessary, and it is seldom that a moonlight walk can be enjoyed through the cloisters, or to the romantic glen where the fountain rises.

At night, however, the beauty of these open galleries is finely brought out by means of gas, with which they are lighted, and which must indeed have a splendid effect: as we saw them with the sun-light streaming through, they appeared to extreme advantage, but a violent fall of rain which lasted two hours convinced us how sad and damp and desolate a residence the Abbey of Fontenai must be in "winter and cold weather."

Not long since, in digging before the portal of the principal entrance, in order to construct some new buildings connected with the manufactory, a curious discovery came to light. Only a few feet below the ground was found an oval temple, surrounded by a colonnade, in tolerable preservation: several instruments of Gaulic sacrifice were lying about in different parts; and there is reason to suppose that, had the excavations been carried on, many curious evidences of Druid worship would have occurred. As, however, this was not the object of the proprietor, and he did not wish to disturb the venerable remains, the ground was reclosed, and marks placed so that the spot could be readily found again, and the mysterious temple was restored to its original obscurity.

The valley is altogether a place of singular interest and beauty, and tradition says that this charming race of fairies of Fontenai is not the only family distinguished for loveliness,—no less than three vieing with each other in attractions, as the stream is followed. One however is now gone, which was considered to bear the bell, and consisted of a Scotch lady, married to a French husband, and her daughters, all *si charmantes, si séduisantes*, as a gentleman of Montbard

described them to us, that it was positively incautious to look at them:

De les regarder vous gardez!

I christened the course of the stream "the Dangerous Valley,"—a title which appears, if all be true that is told, appropriate enough.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Val de Suzon.—St. Seine.—Approach to Dijon.—Tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy.—Bonne d'Artois.—Passage of the English.—Sacred Relic.—Paintings.—Pitying Angels.—Diane de Poitiers.—Poplars.—Cours.—Promenades.—Bad feeling in France.—Churches.—Black Virgin.—Castle.—Variegated Roofs.

Our road to Dijon from Montbard was through St. Seine, as we were anxious to arrive by the magnificent Val de Suzon, of which we had heard so much. The country is pretty the whole way, but has no remarkable features. St. Seine is in a deep valley, and the approach to it is very picturesque, but there is nothing worthy of much remark in the town: the buildings of its ancient abbey have disappeared except a few, which formed part of the residence of its abbots, and they are so built into modern houses as to be scarcely recognizable. The inn at which we slept had a curious winding stair in a turret, and appeared to have been part of an ancient construction. The church is much defaced, but must once have

been very grand: there are still remains of fine architecture and ornament in its pillars, open stone galleries, and elevated arches. Two altars, placed at the entrance and supporting the holy water, have every appearance of having a Pagan origin: they are adorned with grapes and foliage, and small animals, amongst which the snail is conspicuous. One would imagine they must have stood in a temple of Bacchus. One altar and chapel of the fifteenth century have been well restored: in another and on the walls are some very curious fresco paintings of very early date, exhibiting scenes in which the Dukes of Burgundy and their attendants figure. The source of the river Seine is at a little distance from the town, and seems to have supplied the Romish calendar with the saint who presides over the spot.

Nothing can be grander or more imposing than the entrance of the deep gorge of the Val de Suzon: its sombre forests, enormous wild rocks, and sheer precipices give a lively idea of the scenery of the Alps. Beside the high road, which is extremely good, rise immense masses of rock of the most singular form, jagged and pointed, and taking the shape of castles and towers of gigantic proportions. On one side, starting from the profound ravine beneath, is a

steep flat rock, entirely perpendicular, crowned with a thick forest of dark foliage: this extends its long uninterrupted wall for a great distance, closing in the valley; huge rugged blocks of grey stone are scattered here and there over the mountains, and in some parts of the road the rocks are so high that the eye can scarcely reach their summit. There are grottoes filled with stalactites in the neighbourhood, which are reported to be very fine.

Four leagues beyond this the town of Dijon is reached, which is certainly one of the cleanest and handsomest in France, and deserves to be still, as formerly, the capital of Burgundy.

The position of Dijon is very advantageous, at the foot of a chain of mountains, commanded by the Mont Afrique, and in the midst of a fertile plain, which extends as far as Franche Comté and Savoy. The streets are wide and open, the houses and hotels well built of stone, the ramparts agreeable, and offering the most delightful views on all sides. The public walks are remarkably good and of extraordinary extent, the five entrance gates handsome, and though but little of antiquity remains within its walls it cannot fail to be pleasing and admired. The absence, however, of those antiquities of which the traveller has

heard so much, and which on his first arrival he so eagerly seeks, causes a feeling of disappointment to take possession of his mind, which may influence him during the stay, and prevent him from being as much pleased with Dijon as he might otherwise have been.

This was my own case when I discovered that the splendid tombs of the Dukes of Burgundy, so celebrated and so valued, were all destroyed but two,—and those two had been restored, bit by bit, from a mass of mutilation which had involved all that was to be found in the churches of Dijon! Even these are no longer seen in the Cathedral of St. Benigne, where they were placed after being taken from the Chartreux, but must be sought in a chamber of the *musée*. This chamber, however, is worthy to enclose such relics, for it is one of the *salles* of the Palais des Etats, and is preserved almost entire, the carved walls, ceilings, gallery, and magnificent chimney presenting a whole of extreme beauty and grandeur.

Here are placed the tombs of Jean sans Peur, and his wife Marguérite de Bavière, and of Philippe le Hardi.

Nothing can be more exquisitely executed than the figures of the little Chartreux, who stand in niches round the tomb in different

attitudes of grief. The draperies, the features, and the expression are perfect; the tabernacle work, round and above them, is rich in the extreme, and the restorations are conducted with great taste; but the same can scarcely be said of the principal figures themselves, which, though well restored as far as regards joining the shattered parts, are painted to imitate the original, and the opaque and coarse manner in which this is done is a sad contrast to the little which still remains of the old ornament. The hands of the duke are old, and quite unique in their delicate form and colouring, the veins and small bones and muscles brought out with the minuteness of miniature, and the colour transparent and life-like; while the dull thick plaister, daubed by a modern hand over the faces, is extremely disagreeable to the eye, making these venerable statues look like painted wooden dolls, thus deforming the clear alabaster, which is plainly seen through the delicate *stain* of the ancient master's pencil.

Although very fine, these tombs never could have compared with those beautiful monuments of the Dukes of Brétagne, one of which, that of Duke Francis II. at Nantes, enraptures the beholder by its inimitable grace and exquisite minuteness of detail. I had expected to see

this surpassed, but found that the talent of the Burgundians for embellishment had been exerted in this instance, for these famous works of art I have seen equalled in many churches both at home and abroad, which I think cannot be said of the treasure of the Cathedral of Nantes.

But perhaps the modern artist deserves more praise than blame, for it seems that these fine monuments, famous for ages, were at the Revolution knocked to pieces with the utmost care that malice could bring to the work of destruction; but for the number of these beautiful little figures, all must have disappeared, but many have escaped, and are still preserved in the museum, each being an evidence of the extraordinary skill of the sculptor. They are of white marble, this material and alabaster forming the tombs; angels, lions, shields, canopies, all are dispersed, and, considering the state of degradation in which the *débris* were found, it is creditable that they should have been put together as well as they are. The charm of harmony is, however, gone, and it is more congenial to look at these weeping and lamenting monks in their isolated state, than to see them brought together at random, and probably standing in niches which do not belong to them.

One of the most beautiful of the tombs was that of Philippe le Bon, and Bonne d'Artois his wife, which has disappeared altogether: the following verses were written by a poet of the time, in honour of the fair duchess, who, after a short year of happy marriage, died in child-birth, 15th September 1425, in her palace at Dijon, regretted by her husband and her subjects.

Guillaume Vaudrey, a knight and a minstrel, thus laments her in quaint strains, which disclose some curious particulars of the habits and customs of her time:

COMPLAINTE.

Hélas! hélas! hélas! Bourgogne!
Trop mal se porte ta besogne
D'avoir perdu Bonne d'Artois
Qui fut ta duchesse neuf mois
Dame de grant diligence
Née de la maison de France.

Oncques n'ama tirannie
Larrons, pillars, ne roberie:
C'estoit le mirouer des princesses
Fussent roynes ou Duchesses.

Piteuse fut, dévote et saige,
Gente de corps et de visaige,
Ne querest pas *habits estranges,*
*Queues, cornes, ne longues manches.*

Humblement estoit atournée
Et de robes bien ordonnée,
N'aimoit point gourmanderie
Ne par nuit grand veillerie
Ni vins affectoit d'espices
Dont s'ensuivent plusieurs hords vices :
Ses heures cannoniaulx disoit
Pauvres malades garir faisoit,
Et se estoit grant aulsmonière
Et l'Eglise avoit moult chière.
Jamais n'eut la croys avisée
Que ne feust agenouillée.

Toujours fut bien en compagnie
De femmes en suivant sa vie,
Ne mettoit nul en son service
Quelle sceut blame ne vice.
Tout son temps fut renommée
Et du menu peuple aimée :
Car ferme estoit en justice,
Et à grace dulce et propice.
Et si heoit moult la guerre
Et paix noirissoit en son terre.

Sa fin catholique et sancte
Monstre quelle aimoit Dieu sans feincte,
Or lui prions que par sa grace
En paradis son lieu ly face,
Et nous doint tost une nouvelle
Dame qui soit pareille à elle,
Et nous face bonne lignée ;
Dicte amen je vous en prie.

The poet's wish was accomplished, for Philippe espoused in 1429 Isabella, daughter of John, King of Portugal, who brought him, be-

sides several other children, Charles le Téméraire, who succeeded him.

When Francis I. visited Dijon in 1521, he was anxious to see the head of Jean sans Peur, who was killed at the bridge of Montereau, by Tanneguy de Chatel. The tomb was opened, and the king regarded with surprise the large mark of the wound. "Be not astonished, sire," said the prior of the Chartreux, who was on the spot, "it was by this opening that the English made a passage into France."

At Dijon almost all the recollections of ancient times must be sought for in the wrecks which have been gathered into the museum, and very little even there remains. Of the once unrivalled and far-famed Sainte Chapelle not even a stone is left: where it stood is now the new Salle de Spectacle and the market for fruit.

This magnificent edifice, which for several centuries received additions to its beauty, was founded in 1172 by Duke Hugues III., and was not finished till the time of Louis XIII. The order of Toison d'Or, instituted by Philippe le Bon, held its chapters here and had its college. It was here that, surrounded by his *preux*, the knights of the houses of Vergy, Vienne, Baupremont, Damas, and the flower of the nobles

of his states, the Duke of Burgundy, after having had his banners blessed with great pomp, a second time took his way to Palestine.

In this church was carefully preserved a *Host*, sent to Philippe le Bon, in 1433, by Pope Eugène IV. It was held in great veneration at Dijon, and was placed in a case of pure gold enriched with precious stones, and surmounted by the golden crown which Louis XII. wore on the day of his coronation, and which he had sent to Dijon by two heralds-at-arms. This treasure was placed in a golden coffer adorned with all the jewels which Isabella the Duchess had presented to the Sainte Çhapelle in honour of the sacred relic.

This chapel, a *chef-d'œuvre* of art, was, after suffering from revolutionary rage, finally *sold by auction*, and entirely demolished in 1807.

A beautiful model in wood, which gives a correct representation of the building, and is in part ancient, is preserved in the museum, and shows how much has been lost by the town in its destruction. Another exquisite model is that of the cross of the famous Puits de Moïse, part of which still exists in a private house, but which we could not see, as workmen are now engaged in repairing the reservoir: it is another ornament of this collection, and does the ut-

most credit to the artist who has so faithfully copied one of the most elegant and graceful pieces of sculpture that can be imagined. Figures of prophets, amongst whom Moses is conspicuous, support the cross, their attitudes and expressions of great variety and majesty. The original was by Claux Sluter, the statuary, who made the tomb of Philippe le Hardi. He was from Holland, and retired to the monastery of St. Etienne, where he finished his career.

There is a large collection of paintings in the museum, most of them copies of good masters, and none very remarkable for merit, except the works of a native of Dijon, Colson, all of which are good. One, a young girl surprised by sleep, who holds in a riband a canary bird which a cat is watching from behind a screen, is charmingly natural and full of grace and spirit, and worthy to rank with some of the best of Greuze.

Some singular pictures of saints, virgins, and a royal marriage by *Tassel*, a painter of the seventeenth century, born at Langres, attract the attention, and a series of ancient portraits of dukes and bishops of Dijon are interesting.

One little gem, attributed to Albert Durer, deserves particular mention. It is the head of John the Baptist in a charger of gold richly

chased. All round are angels, of miniature proportions, each plunged into the deepest grief, and in attitudes of childish sorrow quite irresistible. One is seated on the edge of the dish, his head buried in his hands, which lean on his knees, while his little cheeks are red and swollen, and his eyes overflowing with tears: another is kneeling on the forehead of the saint, and is endeavouring to raise his eyelid, which he has partially effected, his own streaming meanwhile. One, given up to despair, is tearing his pretty curls, and evidently screaming with distress as he flies up to Heaven on variegated wings: others are locked in each other's arms weeping bitterly, and will not be comforted. A beautiful painted frame, adorned with flowers, surrounds the chief figures, and medallions in compartments represent the story of John the Baptist all round. This lovely little picture is in perfect preservation, and is a treasure of delicacy: the drawing is extremely good, the colouring vivid, and the truth of the head itself is admirable.

Another precious and curious picture is a portrait of Diane de Poitiers, one very likely to have resembled the famous favourite. She is represented entirely without drapery, and is seen three-quarter length, her form extremely

lovely, and the complexion delicately fair, her face a long oval, and the nose long and well formed, the hands and arms of remarkable beauty. Before her is a table strewed with roses, and on it stands a small ornamented casket full of jewels: she is taking a string of pearls from it. Some gilded figures support a splendid mirror which reflects her face: her bright auburn hair is dressed in a crescent shape, as usual, and an ornament of pearls and gold forms a kind of coronet on the top, with one large pearl depending on the high white forehead: her throat is encircled by a collar covered with jewels, with a circle of pearls above it. Such a collar the early pictures of Mary Stuart represent her as wearing. Her eyes are dark and expressive, the eyebrows delicately pencilled, and the whole face very beautiful. In the background two attendants are kneeling before a coffer, from which they seem taking dresses.

Amongst the relics of the middle ages, in which the museum is rich as well as in objects of Roman and Egyptian art, are five richly wrought ivory boxes belonging to the toilet-table of a Duchess of Burgundy—her *escarcelle* or reticule; eight knives and three forks used by the *écuyer tranchant* of the Duke of Bur-

gundy; a poignard, *étui*, and knife of the same; the cross of St. Robert abbot of Cîteaux, and a ring of another abbot; the cup of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, and numerous other very interesting curiosities; several very fine enamels of Limoges, and numerous mosaics, all of superior merit.

The Jardin des Plantes of Dijon is finely situated, and is very rich in curious shrubs: it occupies the site of the once famous convent of Chartreux, where the Dukes of Burgundy were entombed, and which was an emporium of magnificent monuments of all kinds. In the Jardin de l'Arquébuse which adjoins, are the fine poplars which have long been the boast of Dijon: two are of great size, the largest quite gigantic, both as to its height and girth; it is a magnificent object, both in the garden and at a distance, from one of the fine promenades leading to it. Although all the trees here are very antique and of remarkable height, these two rise so far above the rest that they form a leafy spire conspicuous afar. They are of great age, but still look very vigorous. All round the shaded retreat in which they grow we observed at intervals beautiful erections, like chapels, with exquisitely worked arches and colonnades: they

seemed of alabaster, and the richest and most delicate workmanship adorned them: these we found had always existed, and were the sole remains of the buildings connected with the Chartreux. Probably they were then, as they might be now, summer-houses for the recreation of the monks, who seemed to deny themselves no sort of enjoyment in their charming retreats, where all that riches could procure was at their disposal. The disgusting state in which these beautiful little alcoves are allowed to remain, prevented us from entering them, and the sadly neglected appearance of this part of the gardens does little credit to the Dijonnais. The Cabinet d'Histoire Naturelle and Bibliothèque are both good.

That in which Dijon is superior to most towns in France is the surpassing beauty of its public walks, which are *really* as fine as they have the reputation of being; a fact somewhat rare, particularly in Burgundy, where a passion for exaggeration is very prevalent. The promenade, called Cours du Parc, which leads to the park, and was called in 1610 Cours de la Reine, was begun under the government of the Grand Condé, and finished under that of the Duc d'Enghein, his son; this walk, in the style of the Champs Elysées of Paris, but much more picturesque,

from the open country and fine hills beyond, on each side, is nearly two miles long; at about half its length there is a circular opening, used as a place of exercise for the troops, and at the extremity of its continuation the park is reached, which was laid out by Le Nôtre, and is a magnificent place for the resort of the public.

This park formerly belonged to the Princes of Condé, who delighted in affording the people permission to walk there. Louis XIV. in 1673, gave the sum of forty thousand livres to be expended in beautifying it. It is said that the first time he saw the Cours and the park, in 1683, he was so struck with it that he pronounced it the finest plantation in the kingdom.

The entrance gate is grand and simple: the iron *grille* which closed it was taken away on the 13th July 1792, to leave a free passage for the march of the Confédérés.

This reunion was formed of the departments of the ancient province of Burgundy, and was composed of more than five thousand national guards, commanded by the young Count de Buffon, who perished in 1794, a victim of the reign of terror! In vain, on the scaffold did the unfortunate heir of the immortal Buffon invoke the mânes of his father, nothing could

appease the fury of those butchers in the pay of the execrable Robespierre.

The promenades on the ramparts are delightful on every side: those beneath and beyond, planted in what must formerly have been the moats and outer defences, all are charming; in fact it is impossible anywhere to possess greater conveniences for out-of-door amusement than at Dijon, and here, for the first time, we observed an appearance of enjoyment amongst the population, not merely confined to the lower orders, for whose exclusive entertainment and recreation everything seems made in France. Along the alleys leading to the park, ladies may be met on horseback, accompanied by their cavaliers; groups of walkers are seen, as in the Champs Elysées at Paris; elegant *toilettes* appear, and the actual existence is evident of a genteel middle class, rarely to be found out of Paris. Indeed, the total absence of this class throughout the country renders the towns extremely dull; in every town there are promenades, but no persons are to be seen there but the common people, whose costume, though picturesque sometimes, in a landscape, is sufficiently monotonous unmixed with others of a more refined stamp. To an eye accustomed as we are in England to see a crowd composed of all ranks, it is dreary

and unpleasant to meet with no figures but those of peasants, in places where their manners are unsuitable; and the knowledge of the reasons for this exclusiveness makes the fact less pleasant still. It cannot be concealed from the observer of the present state of France, that the superior orders live in a state of *constant fear* of those beneath them. The arrogance and purse-proud insolence of the latter, when circumstances bring forth an expression of their opinions, explains this feeling; their envy and hatred of all those above them, and their ignorant assumption, is too apparent to escape comment; and the only way to prevent unpleasant collision seems, to the better educated and gentler nurtured part of the community, to be by retiring and leaving the coast clear for the all-powerful and all-engrossing people; who, in proportion as their wealth has increased, have lost all respect and deference for others, and though not a whit superior, by education, to their former selves, they are always looking forward to the time when *an equal division of property* shall make them superior to those who are not yet altogether degraded from a rank to which they were born.

This, however, applies less to Dijon than to most other places, at least as far as outward

appearance goes; for here there is more appearance of ease and comfort, and less evidence of mistrust than in any town we had seen; consequently Dijon is by far the most agreeable place of residence in this part of France, and as it is on the high road from Switzerland and Italy, there is a movement and life which is very advantageous.

The churches, which are generally our first object, attracted us less at Dijon than usual: they are in general much defaced, and of all the gorgeous edifices which once adorned the town very few are left. Some name of renown is now only heard as applied to a market, or a *caserne*, or a manufactory; all the convents, and hospitals, and monastic institutions are gone; everything is either new or being re-erected; and scarcely a vestige of antiquity is to be discovered in the streets.

The cathedral church of St. Benigne, erected on the site of a temple of Saturn, has little to excite admiration, though it was formerly of great beauty. Two towers with a double gallery between, of delicate proportions, have a good effect at a distance, but the discoloured, defaced mass which the walls present from the street, is anything but pleasing. To look at it now one can hardly imagine that it could once boast

of three hundred and seventy-one pillars, one hundred and twenty windows of magnificent painted glass, eight towers, three great portals, and twenty-four entrance doors.

Its treasures could not preserve it from the attacks of the wicked; in vain did it possess the head of the blessed Saint Benigne himself, which was enclosed in an enamelled shrine, encrusted with precious stones, and whose miracles should have stood the church of his adoption in some stead; statues, pictures, relics, ornaments, all were confounded in a general ruin, at that period of immortal barbarism, which ruined all the monuments in France.

Some of the doors have still remains of their former state; the elevation and the form of the interior excite attention, with a few restored tombs, and some good carving; but on the whole there is little to detain the amateur in St. Benigne.

The churches of Nôtre Dame and St. Michael are the two finest in Dijon. Nôtre Dame has a neglected look, and is surrounded by shabby houses, but its façade is even now very beautiful, covered with figures more or less mutilated; seventeen winged animals formerly adorned it, all these have been dreadfully defaced, and most of the statues are more than half-demolished,

and the niches empty. In the interior the surrounding galleries are beautifully worked; the slender pillars are of not more than six inches in circumference, and are, some, fifteen, others thirty feet high, all without a join in the stone, which made the learned Spon conjecture that in early times there must have existed a method of *melting* stone, and moulding it at will.

This church can boast of a miraculous virgin, which, notwithstanding the determined animosity shown to all the statues of this description by the mob, is supposed to have been preserved, and in all its original blackness and ugliness figures on the chief altar. It appears that the face alone of this virgin is black, the rest of the body being red; her chin is pointed, and her eyes are very prominent: she is of wood, and very coarsely sculptured. Altogether, she might pass very well for an image of the Indian idol, the hideous goddess Kali of fearful memory, the patroness of the Thugs. She is said to resemble, like a sister, the *most* miraculous of all Virgins, the Virgin of Loretto.

The façade of the church of St. Michael is very striking, it has two towers of great beauty, decorated with five orders of architecture, and surmounted by octagon cupolas. Above the principal entrance is a very fine bas-relief of

forty figures; a great many others were broken at the Revolution, but this, which is a *chef d'œuvre* of art, fortunately escaped. The interior is not remarkable, and the decorations are modern.

One of the most conspicuous objects in Dijon is the great clock tower of the Palais des Etats, which was commenced in 1367, by order of Philippe le Hardi. There is nothing either picturesque or beautiful in its construction: it is square and plain, and of gigantic proportions, and from its immense height a view is commanded of the whole country round. It is used now as an observatory. This tower, a *salle des gardes*, some of the buildings of the kitchens, and the remains of walls, form a part of what was the palace of the Dukes of Burgundy.

The castle of Dijon is now a barrack, and its venerable walls are seen to advantage from the ramparts: only the entrance towers remain, which have a strong resemblance to those which we remarked at Peronne.

At the corners of several streets we discovered some of those exquisite little *tourelles* which it was customary to build at the angles of edifices; two in particular, as sharp and fresh as if just erected.

The old custom of roofing the houses with

variegated tiles is not quite discontinued: the roof of the cathedral, for instance, has just been restored, and shines in the sun with all the brightness of enamel; the aspect is not pleasing, the patterns are gawdy, and the whole looks like floor-cloth; where the colours are faded they have a more harmonious effect, but it is not a taste much to be commended.

## CHAPTER XV.

### The Vines.

We were now preparing to quit the region of the *Côte d'Or*, and its vintages, so celebrated throughout Europe. It may not be considered uninteresting to some readers to name a few particulars respecting the growth of the vine, for the knowledge of which I am indebted to observations made on the spot by persons informed on the subject, and to some of the numerous publications which every season produces.

In Champagne and Burgundy pamphlets are continually appearing, as well as works of larger bulk, which hold out, as temptations to the purchaser, improvements in the method of cultivating the vine, or in the manufacture of wine. It does not appear, however, that much change has taken place since the time when Arthur Young, in 1787, visited the caves of Epernay, which have merely changed masters; and, instead of M. Lasnier and M. Dorsé, who had in

his time from 50 to 60,000 bottles in those extensive cellars, M. Moët, of our own, can boast of having no less than three millions, and Mr. Jackson, of Auxerre, can do the same, besides numerous other merchants, whose fine country-houses and extensive grounds prove their riches and the success of their speculations.

To M. Moët, or his heirs, for he is lately dead, now belongs the famous vineyard of Hautvilliers, formerly one of the rich possessions of the Benedictines, every trace of whose convent is swept away; but the vineyard remains, and probably flourishes all the better, over the mouldering stones of the fallen walls, for the vine is generally said to prefer a stony soil. Some writers on the subject contend that "earth which is *nourishing*, slightly stony, rather light, and not humid, suits the vine best." The most advantageous position is on the slope of a hill in a south-eastern direction.

The summits of hills are too much exposed to winds; the bottoms of valleys and plains may be good for the production of the wood of the vine, but the grapes do not ripen so well as on the inclined coteaux. *Bacchus amat colles.*

It is not enough merely to plant; the quality of, rather than the quantity produced by, the vine, should be considered. Philippe le Hardi,

Duke of Burgundy, issued an ordinance at Dijon, in 1395, expressed in these words: "Understanding that on the hill where the best wine in the kingdom is grown, and of which our Holy Father the Pope, our lord the King, and many other great lords, are in the habit, by preference, of making provision, there has been of late planted *gamais*, a bad plant, which has many times deceived and defrauded foreign merchants, by which much injury and loss has been sustained, it is hereby ordered that the *déloyal gamais* shall be cut and extirpated in a month from this time, under penalty of a fine of sixty sous each plant;" so desirous was the duke that the reputation of the famous wine of Burgundy should not suffer.

Those vines are said to be best, which are planted in *cordons* and run on trellises; but many are still grown on single props. This is the case at Chablis, and in some other excellent vineyards; but it appears that the support of the trellises is generally recommended; although, to a casual observer, a mere traveller amongst the vines, the difference is not very apparent. It is not uncommon to observe between the ranks of vines beans and potatoes, but this is a custom which is not approved. Judicious prŭning is of the utmost consequence;

indeed, as much is thought to depend on that operation as on the position of the vineyard or the quality of the plant. There must be great caution, too, in the choice of a vine-dresser; and there is always danger in employing a vigneron who is himself a proprietor, for many reasons, some obvious enough, but, among others, because certain operations should only be performed in certain states of the weather, and these particular periods he always contrives to devote to his own vineyard. "I know," says M. Clerc,* "a proprietor, who being in treaty with a vigneron to attend to his plants, and having a high road at the foot of the vineyard, introduced this clause: 'I expect them to be dressed in such a manner, that passers-by shall think they belong to a vine-dresser.'" Another anecdote is characteristic. A proprietor passing his vineyard one day in a spring frost, found his labourer working, although it was a most injudicious time. "Bon jour, Monsieur," said the vigneron. "*Bons jours* are for you, not for me," replied the angry master, and passed on.

There is an old proverb which explains the different seasons when the vines may be expected to be productive; it is still quoted in the wine countries:—

* Author of the "Manuel du Vigneron."

Quand la pomme passe la poire
Vends ton vin, ou le fais boire;
Quand la poire passe la pomme,
Garde ton vin, bon homme.

The famous *vin de la comète* of 1811 was superior to any that had ever been known. When the Allied Powers occupied France, the soldiers, who knew but little French beyond the word *comète*, which they repeated incessantly, gorged themselves night and day with this nectar, which they exhausted, and of this incomparable crop the memory alone remains! That of 1834 is still boasted of with pride on the banks of the Loire; and I believe the vintage was equally fine in other parts of France.

By a singular contradiction, a very abundant year generally brings ruin on the vigneron, who, with his family, solely employs himself in cultivating his own vines. The reason is plain enough: his casks and vats are overflowing, and he cannot dispose of his teeming treasures; his wine, therefore, remains too long in old casks, gets a bad flavour, and a thousand accidents happen which he has no power to remedy. It is otherwise with the large proprietor, to whom an opportunity is afforded of exporting more wine, and consequently gaining considerably.

Those grapes which are the most agreeable

to the palate are not always the best for wine; indeed, that which they produce is frequently bad; and the reverse is also the case: a great change takes place in the course of fermentation, and the different operations necessary to bring out the real qualities of the fruit, so that it is impossible to judge by merely tasting the juice what it will hereafter become.

The plant which is called *Pinot* is reputed to produce the best wine, yet there are but few vineyards entirely planted with it; because, though the wine is superior, the produce is so small that the expense of cultivation is scarcely compensated by the price. For this reason they mix it with other grapes, and make what is called *vin pinoté:* this is to be regretted, as there is no comparison in the quality, and the buyer is defrauded who thinks that he has obtained possession of the precious juice of the real Pinot, a piece of good fortune which attends very few. If a *Pinot* is surrounded by plants called *troyens*, the flavour of the fruit of each will partake of the other; it is therefore desirable, in order to preserve the wine pure, that the plants should be grown separately.

In travelling in Champagne and Burgundy, the stranger is sometimes surprised that the wine given him at inns is so bad; but perhaps

in no part of France is he likely to meet with so much bad wine, because all that is indifferent is "drunk on the premises;" and it often happens that an innkeeper has a small vineyard of his own, which yields wine enough for his purposes: he therefore presents his bad wine to his guests, trusting that the general reputation of the country will save him from the necessity of producing that which is more expensive. Every sort of flavour between ink and vinegar is to be found in Champagne, the *ordinaire* being in general poor at the best, and in most cases detestable. It is only at private tables that good wine is to be had, and the mere passer-by may hope to meet with it in vain. The common wine of Burgundy is better, on an average, than that of Champagne: as soon as the frontier is passed the difference is perceptible, and at Tonnerre the excellence of the first Burgundian vintage is appreciated: if by chance, however, the stranger tastes that of Tanlay, only two leagues off, he is struck with the inferiority of its quality. After all, there cannot be the slightest comparison as to general excellence between the wine of Bordeaux and that of any other *ordinaire* in France; but its price is out of all bounds in the two rival districts.

It would be an almost endless task to describe the qualities of the different vineyards abounding in Burgundy. In the neighbourhood of many towns are small spots which produce a vintage greatly esteemed, but whose quantity is insufficient to make it worth while to send it from the neighbourhood. The famous wines of the Côte d'Or begin at Corpeau, below Dijon; there is the *Clos*, distinguished by amateurs, of Santenay, Morgeot, Gravières, and Chassagne, and the white wine of Meurseult. The renowned vineyards of Volnay and Pomard follow, with those of Beaune. Near Aloxe is the well-known and esteemed growth of Corton, considered equal to the *Clos Vougeot* itself. An excellent *ordinaire* is produced at Comblanchin. The celebrated wines of Romanée-Conti, Richebourg, and La Tâche, are found near the little town of Nuits, near which are the splendid vineyards of Vougeot and Chambertin. The wines of Beaujolais and the Mâconnais in general are more esteemed as *ordinaire* than fine wine; but some of them are distinguished by superior qualities, such as Romanèche, Thorrins, Moulin-à-vent. Those of the Châlonnais which have the highest character, are Givry and Mercurey.

It is to be regretted, that the thirst of gain should so prevail as to go far towards destroy-

ing, by degrees, a reputation which ages have established; and that the introduction, even into the best vineyards, of the proscribed *gamais*, which excited the indignation of Philippe-le-Hardi, should be still practised. There can be no doubt that this, if persevered in, will ruin the fine wine which has gained for Champagne and Burgundy a name amongst nations; and it is generally acknowledged that the quality of most of the celebrated vintages has greatly changed within a few years.

## CHAPTER XVI.

The Cabaret.—Commeran.—The Gallic Cock.—Roman Arch.—Autun.—Roman Bridge.—The Shepherdess of the Pigs.—The Fairy River Arroux.—Fairy Guides.—La Pierre de Couard.—Cathedral of Autun.—Museum.—Campbell the Poet.—Brunehaut.—David.—Eumenes.

THE road to Autun on quitting Dijon is extremely wild and picturesque: close to the town rises a wall of jagged rocks, similar to those in the Val de Suzon, and equally wild and majestic, bearing the forms of castles and cathedrals, their towers and spires bristling in every direction, like a petrified city: those we passed were nearly opposite the site of part of the famous Abbey of Chartreux, where a building is now being erected for a lunatic asylum.

The country continued very pretty as we advanced by ranges of mountains, some near and some distant, and constantly varying their graceful shapes. The corn was now nearly ripe, and its rich glow added much beauty to the landscape. The early morning, when we began our journey, was fine, but we had not

reached Commeran, about half way, when violent rain came on, which continued with such unintermitting fury that we were unable to take advantage of the resting of our horses to reach the château of M. le Duc de Damas, whose park gates, close to the village inn where we stopped, invite strangers to enter and pay a visit to the fine grounds and mansion.

Our position was singular enough at this cabaret: our breakfast was served in the travellers' chamber, where our *conducteur* and other *voyageurs* of various ranks and conditions were also accommodated. Cold and damp as we were, we gladly accepted the offer of the pretty young landlady to take a seat by the kitchen fire, and there we entered into conversation with her and a guest who appeared an *habitué* of the house, and who seemed accustomed to broach his opinions without fear of contradiction, though it happened, as we soon discovered, that his political notions and those of the hostess were diametrically opposed.

Her manners possessed a certain refinement unusual in this part of the country, and we were not surprised when she informed us that she had been brought up in the family of the the late Mde Damas, of whom she spoke in

terms of great respect and affection: far different was her tone from that we had long been accustomed to hear, vituperating the great, and allowing no virtue, benevolence, or consideration to any of the aristocratic race. She mildly opposed the vehement exclamations of her republican guest, by asking how she could be expected to agree that the rich and noble were all so bad, when she had instances to the contrary so near her, in the long-continued goodness of this family, so beloved in the country and such tried friends to the poor. "It seems to me," she said, simply, "that all people are good in their condition; but I cannot see of what use it would be to the poor to deprive them of kind masters, who provide them with work."

The republican turned from her with contempt, and launched forth into details of the proper mode of governing the land, which clearly proved him to be a man of wonderful penetration. The widow,—for such she seemed to be,—went on distributing to two of her children their bread and caps before they sallied forth through the rain to school, and while she appeared to listen to his harangue, only replied at its conclusion, "Eh bien! on a tant de fois changé de rois en France

sans faire du bien—plait à Dieu qu'on nous laisse celui qui règne à présent!" This set the orator off on a new theme, and poor Louis-Philippe was not spared: he went on to show that never was France in so degraded, debased, and ruined a condition as at this moment. He then, as usual, fell foul on England, and enumerated the insults we are continually heaping on the "national honour." "It was only the other day," said he, addressing me, "that you brought out a piece at your principal theatre, which has had a great run,—the subject a caricature of us, representing the Gallic cock as a bird which would crow but not fight! This insult we owe to Louis Philippe." I asked him if the French were so tender as to be angry at a caricature, and told him we had a habit of laughing at everything at home or abroad, in our country, but no one ever thought of being offended at a joke. I found, however, that we were likely to have a scene similar to that we were indulged with by our friend *le chef* at St. Quentin, and was not sorry when our driver gave us his gracious permission to proceed on our journey. This unfortunate story of the Gallic cock was repeated to me more than once by different persons afterwards, and seems to be looked upon as

something too heinous to be forgiven. Whether such a caricature ever appeared in England I am not aware, but our neighbours believe it did, and are resolved to be *revenged.*

Still following a beautiful road bordered with numerous fine oaks, we arrived at the Roman town of Bibrax, *soror et æmula Romæ*, now called Autun, in the department of Saône et Loire. We entered through a fine ruined arch of triumph, still grand in its decay, called La Porte St. André. It is a mere shell, all the supporting stones having given way between the row of six small arches above the four large lower ones; so that it appears double, and has an air of lightness probably foreign to its original construction. It is sustained by iron cramps, and having thus remained for ages there is little fear of its falling. This fine gate is built into a wall and towers, which it joins, of a much later date: it is very striking and venerable, and impresses the stranger with a pleasing interest, promising much more of classical antiquity in the interior of the town; nor is he disappointed, for in every street he may trace remains of temples and walls:—here is a head of Cupid peeping from above a cottage door, there a fluted column supporting an altar to Venus;

in another street the very name tells of its having been built on the site of a temple of Anubis,—rue *chauchien (chef, i. e.* head). Apollo, Janus, Pluto, Proserpine, Mars, and all the gods had temples here, and so great its fame, that even now the inhabitants boast of their Roman descent. We had not been half an hour in the town, when we were accosted by a woman of the class of tradespeople, who informed us of many classical particulars respecting her place of abode, which she assured us was "the *real* Bibrax, the sister of Rome." It was called Autun for another reason, she said; for in the time of the Romans it was besieged, and so stoutly defended that "il n'y restoit qu'*un* seul homme, pas *autre*." This etymology may be as correct as that frequently allowed by more learned commentators.

Autun is on all accounts a charming place. Its antiquities may be a constant source of delight, and its natural beauties are of the highest order. Nothing, in fact, can be more enjoyable, and the summer would glide away all peace and beauty in this quiet yet cheerful place. Even we, in spite of some days of rain which confined us in the town, enjoyed every hour of our sojourn here, and felt extreme regret on quitting it. We were not surprised to

hear of a countryman of ours, Mr. Dalton Forbes, having been arrested in passing through Autun by its beauties, and taking up his abode here for three months, living amongst the verdant hills and beneath the classical shades which surround this delicious spot.

Our first walk confirmed the favourable first impression, and every new stroll added to our pleasure.

We went through the town, which is clean and spacious, irregularly built, but with wide good streets and very fine squares, excellent dwelling-houses with large gardens, and public buildings extremely grand. Some of the old streets are precipitous and *mazy*, and in general they are of extreme length, particularly those in the faubourgs. We reached the second Roman gate, called La Porte d'Arroux, and were equally struck with its majestic appearance: it is higher than the first, and has fewer arches, more ornamented, is surmounted by a gallery of Corinthian order, and its decorations are of great delicacy and elegance.

We crossed the flat Roman bridge over the River Arroux, but found the tide had so overflowed the banks on that side that we could not enter the meadows, in the midst of which rises the ruined temple of Janus, a conspicuous

and remarkable object seen in all directions on this side. Following an opposite path, along a pretty road at the foot of the outer walls, we had before us, now near, now afar, as the turns permitted, these two magnificent remains of Roman grandeur;—the high arch of triumph commanding the river, and the lofty walls of the temple dominating the flat country round.

Nearly three sides of the temple are standing, having each three windows and a door, through which the light gleaming has a fine effect, as its watchful *eyes* seem following the course of the river at its feet. Its neighbours, dedicated to Pluto and his fair queen, have only a few stones remaining near the bridge.

On our other hand rose the glorious cathedral, and here and there a tower from amongst the buildings of the town which we left behind, continuing our way by a series of towers, and a long Roman wall for more than half a league, till we gained a high hill, from whence we had a fine view of Autun, spread out before us with all its wonders. We then prepared to re-enter the town, after a little deviation, seduced by rural views, and climbed up a rather dilapidated faubourg street leading to a gate ominously name Porte Coquin, which gives entrance to the Quartier du Château.

We here found ourselves on a boulevard too tempting to allow us to go through the arch; this boulevard is on one of the ancient ramparts, and is planted with gigantic trees, from openings between which are charming snatches of country. Here the town wall is of great height and thickness, and the round towers of immense strength.

A range of bold mountains extends on this side, Mont *Jeu* (Mons Jovis), Mont *Dru* (des Druides), and numerous others: amongst those "blue in the distance" appeared the mountain of *Morvan*, which we afterwards crossed in our journey onwards, and which was pointed out by an Ossian-loving acquaintance of Autun, beneath; in the plains, the ripening corn was waving, and groves of chestnut and oak covered the neighbouring eminences. At the extremity of this promenade, much higher than all the other towers, and of a more slender form, though of very strong proportions, rises the Tour de Francois Premier; it formed part of the château, and is all that remains of it. Most commanding and stupendous is its height and appearance, looking, as it does, over a widely extended country from its elevated position. Beneath this tower, under some luxuriant trees in a most secluded nook, seated on a mossy

trunk, we perceived a beautiful little girl, the *shepherdess* of a drove of miniature pigs, so pretty that they deserved such a guardian: she was playing with them, and chastising them for their gambols with a bough of blossoms, and seemed as happy and thoughtless as her charge. We asked her the name of the tower, and she raised her blushing face and large laughing eyes towards it as if it was the first time she had ever thought of its existence. The usual Burgundian answer of "ne connais pas" was all we could elicit between her *patois* and her modesty. We left her, dividing her attention between a *bonbon* and her little fat spotted friends, to continue our walk.

Here the fine *embroidered lace-work* of the cathedral spire comes out in beautiful relief, and at a great distance, standing on a height, with a back-ground of dark blue mountains, we observed a singular pyramidal-shaped object, of an unknown form. As we stood gazing at this, a passer-by, anxious for the honour of Autun, addressed us to let us know that it was the Pierre de Couard, which was a curious piece of antiquity, belonging to the time of the Gauls, and we had only to follow the course of the river to reach it.

Beckoned on by this remarkable object, we

left the boulevard, and descended a steep road till we got to the stream, which we crossed over a rustic bridge, and went on between gardens for some distance, still evidently mounting, till at length we began to feel sure that we had mistaken our way.

One of the little fairy children who seemed placed on our path as guides, assured us with smiles that we were right, for she was going herself to the village of Couard. We therefore proceeded, and found that we had not followed a will-o'-the-wisp, for we presently heard above our heads the murmuring of waters, and were aware that the crystal river Arroux was running along the top of the mountain, from whence it falls at distances, turning numerous mills in its descent, till it subsides amongst the meadows of the temple of Janus, or "de *Janous*," as it is called by the peasants.

We sat down to rest by this beautiful stream, and looked into its pebbly bed as it hurried rapidly along with waves so clear that the colour of every little stone could be distinctly seen at the bottom. Sometimes three, sometimes five feet broad, this mountain stream hurries on between its banks; on one side open to the path, on the other fringed with ash, chestnut, and oak, and garlanded with honey-

suckle and many-tinted wild flowers. Large stones interrupt its course, and it leaps and foams, and forms miniature cascades at every two hundred yards.

We made acquaintance with an old peasant woman, who was washing linen in the river, and who seemed to speak of it as of a friend who was never weary of conferring benefits. Her costume, a petticoat of red and yellow and black stripes, a jacket of dark cloth, snow-white cap and scarlet handkerchief, made her just the required figure to animate the scene. "Ah! c'est une rivière charmante — ah! c'est belle et bonne et douce, et jamais tarie, l'Arroux."

She left off her occupation to converse with us, and make herself mistress of our history and projects, and seemed much amused at our wish to see the heap of stones towards which we were journeying, not considering it worthy of so much attention.

Autun, from this position on the opposite hill, has a very fine effect; its cathedral spire, the high tower of François Prémier, its numerous towers and handsome modern buildings and gardens, its beautiful meadows, arches, and river, — all appear to great advantage.

The village of Couard, through which we passed on our pilgrimage, is one of the dirtiest we had ever yet seen. The people here are famous for their breed of pigs, and appear to pay these animals all due honour, for they share their cabins and live in common with the peasants. The heap of rugged stones which has excited so much interest amongst the learned, stands in a filthy farm-yard, surrounded by every description of rubbish. An opening which has been made near the base, is occupied by the farmer's potatoes; and whenever a new cottage was to be built, some of the stones were accustomed to be taken to serve in its construction: this, however, is now forbidden, and some pains have even been taken to keep the remaining bricks and stones from falling.

Francis I. visited this mysterious pile, and sent for two learned men to determine its character, who pronounced it to be a funereal monument, which is likely to have been the case from the numerous urns which have been dug up in the neighbourhood from time to time. By what chief of the Gauls erected, however, does not appear, and the Pierre de Couard still remains as before, "a marvel and a secret."

We returned from our long ramble by a dif-

ferent route, which very soon brought us to another gate, and we reached our hotel well satisfied with the beauties of the environs.

The cathedral is one of the most majestic erections of the eleventh century: it stands on the site of a pagan temple, and from the style of its pillars and their capitals there is little doubt that much of the building remains as originally built. The arch of entrance is gigantic, both as to height and width, springing from the ground, and enclosing a magnificent flight of steps, which lead to a portal; above is an entablature a good deal defaced, of strange Pagan appearance. The three pillars on each side of the portal are quite perfect, and of workmanship so exquisite that they astonish and delight the eye with their variety and grace. By this portal the temple is entered, and you find yourself in an immense building, surrounded by square fluted pillars of large size: the lofty capitals of these pillars represent Pagan sacrifices: some of the figures appear attendants on Bacchus, crowned with grapes, leading oxen decorated with garlands to an altar, where stands a priest. By two rows of steps from the aisles the circular choir is reached, where once probably stood the statue of the goddess or the god, who here received the homage of the Eduins and

the Romans. Everything about this majestic temple speaks of early mysteries, and impresses the mind with mysterious awe.

In the square before the cathedral is a graceful little fountain of the Ionic order, extremely ornamental and beautiful. It is surmounted by a pelican with extended wings, and bears the date of 1543. It may well have been the work of Jean Goujon, to whom it is attributed.

The museum of the town is in its infancy; the Hôtel de Ville, of which it forms part, is a very stately building, in a fine square, called the Champ de Mars, where a temple to that god once stood, planted with trees, under which is a raised terrace, forming a pleasant promenade. We were told that, in a house without the town, a gentleman of taste had collected a great number of curious relics of antiquity, which we could probably obtain permission to see.

We set out, therefore, to the house of M. Jovet, which we were some time seeking for. As we walked along an avenue of luxuriant trees, by the side of part of the old walls and towers, in a direction we had not yet tried, we saw a gentleman-like looking man slowly preceding us, with a book in his hand; this however he evidently was less occupied in reading

than in attending to our questions of some peasants relative to the mansion before us. He accosted us, and relieved our anxiety on hearing that M. Jovet was absent, by announcing himself as his brother, and offering to show us all the treasures we sought.

We were much gratified by our visit to M. Jovet's cabinet, which contains an inexhaustible store of curiosities, both antique and of the middle ages. Who shall count the pictures, enamels, coins, engravings, arms, vases, that adorn his shelves, and what description can do justice to his perseverance in restoring a whole floor of tesselated pavement, which he found on his ground, and over which he built a saloon? From careful observation he has succeeded in tracing the whole pattern of this splendid mosaic, and having found heaps of the material of which it is composed, he is, with incredible labour, replacing the minute pieces, and bringing out the whole *tableau*, employing to assist him a workman whose skill is little inferior to his own. The centre represents a mounted figure, which he conceives to be Bellerophon. The pattern round is of great beauty, and the medallions very elegant: in some are a group of swans, in others an eagle, a griffin, and other animals.

So much has already been done, that there is great hope that the whole may finally be completed, when it will be a superb work. M. Jovet is writing a history of Autun, a great desideratum; but his advanced age and infirmities threaten to put a stop to his studies, and deprive the world of so desirable an acquisition.

Some time since the poet, Thomas Campbell, was at Autun, and was much interested in the communications made him by M. Jovet, and delighted with the treasures he beheld: he even expressed, I understood, so great an anxiety to see the valuable history completed, that he generously offered to have the work printed at his own expense in England, if the author would consent to such an arrangement.

Amongst the numerous *débris* of ancient churches, Roman columns, capitals, vases, arms, articles of common use, rings, medals, chains, mirrors, all dug up in the neighbourhood,—some of the most curious objects which the care of M. Jovet has preserved from entire annihilation are different fragments of the once splendid tomb of Queen Brunehaut, the foundress of the abbeys of Saint Martin, of Saint Andoche, and Saint Jean le Grand, at Autun.

There were two inscriptions on the black marble of her tomb; one is by Jean Rollin, bishop of Autun in 1483.

> Brunechil fut jadis royne de France
> Fondatresse du saint lieu de céans,
> Cy inhumée l'an six cent quatorze ans
> En attendant de Dieu vraye indulgence.

Amongst the pictures is one, a portrait of himself, by David, when quite young, before he had adopted the plan "*de broyer du rouge.*" It is painted with great simplicity and truth, and much better than many of his latter works.

There are some very fine cabinets of ebony and oak in this collection, which might excite the envy of M. de Sommerard himself, if his magnificent and unique museum at the Hôtel de Cluny were not already full to overflowing. A dagger, with a Toledo blade, inscribed in gold letters, "Mon sire, ma foi, ma patience," is a very fine specimen of the kind, and several swords of magnificent workmanship add to the treasures.

We lingered in this interesting place for a long time, never weary of examining, and delighted to listen to the enthusiastic observations and explanations of our polite guide, whose sorrow knew no bounds that his brother should

be absent. He was, it appeared, a poet, and showed us some very affecting and pleasing verses written by himself, and admirably rendered into English by his friend,—to whom he seemed much attached,—Mr. Dalton Forbes.

He was afterwards our conductor to the site of the celebrated amphitheatre, and *naumachie*, both of which must have been of immense extent. It was in the arena of the former that Maricus, who had risen against Vitellius, was exposed to wild beasts in the presence of the Emperor, and a large assemblage of people.

The ancient splendour of this now secluded and tranquil town is manifested in the numerous vestiges to be discovered everywhere; scarcely a foot of ground can be dug without the spade turning up some treasure; as no care whatever was taken to preserve them, much has entirely disappeared, but the present government has directed its attention to the subject, and a stop has been put to the wanton destruction which was continually going on.

Bibrax was the birth-place of the rhetorician Eumenes, and possessed one of the most celebrated schools of Gaul. Its seminaries are still famous, and both the large and small are fine buildings; the former, of enormous size, was built

in the time of Louis XIV., under the direction of the Abbé Roquette, then bishop of Autun. The gardens were designed by Lenôtre, and the whole occupied the site of a Roman construction, some of the marble of which was found in digging its foundations.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Mountains of Morvan.—Château Chinon.—Froissart.—Storm.—Widow's cottage.—Military Butcher.—Nevers.—*Virgile au Rabot.*

AMONGST the other *agrémens* of Autun its cheapness should not be omitted; our very reasonable bill surprised us extremely, from the rareness of such an occurrence, for our hotel was remarkably good, and our accommodation excellent. A little French *finesse* was, however, practised, to induce us to engage a carriage to Bourges; we found that we could procure the *coupé* of the *diligence*, and therefore set out with a French gentleman for our companion, who was returning from Dijon to his residence at Tours. He had with him a child of about four years old, whom he called Ada, who he told us always went with him on his journeys, and of whom he took the greatest care. We naturally supposed him to be a widower, but soon found that he had a wife and large family at home, but this little girl being his favourite, he had constituted her his *camarade* on all occa-

sions, being disappointed in not having a son. She was so accustomed to travelling that she never suffered from fatigue, and went through all the inconveniences to which she was exposed, like a heroine.

This system of bringing up girls like boys is very prevalent in France; whether it conduces to the improvement of female manners is a question, but it may account for several curious *mannish* customs which now obtain, amongst others the habit of smoking *cigarettes*, which is quite *la grande mode* of late with certain French ladies.

Our route across the high mountains of Morvan was very picturesque; with its large antique oaks, venerable hawthorns, and immense aged chestnuts, covered at this time with star-like yellow blossoms; and we were much struck with the approach to Château Chinon, the *Castrum Caninum* of the Romans, who erected on the most elevated point of that part of the country a strong castle and a temple.

We climbed by a very steep ascent from the town, which is built *en amphithéâtre* at a great height, to the peak where the ruins of the antique castle are still to be traced. They cover a very large space, but are level with the earth, and only a few caves and sunken walls are

visible, amongst kitchen gardens belonging to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who find the fountain, which still issues from the rock, of great service. Nothing can be conceived more commanding than the position of this castle must have made it; a panorama of immense magnitude is spread out beneath, and its boldness and grandeur are extreme,—a whole region of lofty mountains surrounds this, which appears like the monarch of all, and master indeed of the whole country must a lord of such a domain have been.

Its fortifications, double fosses, towers, and battlements, which stood so many sieges, have all disappeared; but the time was when an English army, in spite of all its defences, took possession of Château Chinon, and sacked its walls in 1467.

It must have been an important place to obtain at that period, when the whole country was contended for by armed companies, each eager for pillage and deterred by no obstacles. As we looked round from the height and surveyed the extensive champagne and the chains of mountains, once every one crowned with a fortified castle, the narrative of the Gascon squire, *le Bastot de Mauléon*, to which Froissart lent an attentive ear when they met at Orthès

"at the sign of the moon," occurred vividly to my recollection.

"The companies marched into Burgundy, where they had captains of all nations, Germans, Scots, and people from every country. I was there also as a captain. Our numbers in Burgundy above the river Loire were upwards of twelve thousand, including all sorts. We took by a night attack La Charité, which we held for a year and a half: *everything was ours from La Charité to Puy in Auvergne*, and below Loire as far as Orleans, with the command of the whole river Allier. We had, in the environs of Nevers, twenty-six strong places as well towns as castles, and no knight, squire, or strong man *dared to quit his home unless he had compounded with us.*"

Louis XI. defied, beneath the walls of Château Chinon, the powerful army of the Duke of Burgundy; and many were the "battles, sieges, fortunes" which this stronghold must have known before it became a heap of ruins, amongst the stones of which the inhabitants of the now insignificant little town plant their cabbages!

Whilst we were moralizing on the spot, the bright sky became in an instant overcast, a violent blast swept round the mountain, thick mists

gathered, and a storm of lightning and rain suddenly burst above us, shelterless as we were on the very summit. We crouched down beneath some ruined walls till the first fury of the gust was passed, then made our way towards a few scattered huts near, where we asked refuge, and were admitted by a little girl, who seemed the eldest of a cottage full of children, who were hovering over a fire where their expected dinner was cooking, and close to which their poultry hopped about quite *sans gêne.*

Our usual present of *bonbons* soon made us friends with the silent and scared little group, when our company was joined by a buxom dame, whom we had observed in her garden, on the height, busy gathering vegetables. She invited us to return to the ruins when the storm was passed, so anxious was she to show us all the secrets of the place herself; and as the sun shortly afterwards shone out with great brilliancy, we accepted her offer, leaving our little friends and *la veuve,* their mother, who just then returned from work surprised and grateful for a small donation,—evidently an unaccustomed event in their hovel, which, though very poor, was remarkably neat.

Our new acquaintance was exceedingly com-

municative and loquacious, and having discovered in me a great resemblance to a favourite mistress, with whom she had lived till wedlock united her to an honest butcher of Château Chinon, was unwearied in her endeavours to amuse us. We could not refuse her pressing invitation to enter her shop as we returned, in order that she might exhibit to us the wonders of beauty it contained in the shape of joints of mutton and veal. Nothing certainly could look cleaner or more unlike a French butcher's than her dwelling; and when yielding to her pressing instances we took a seat in her parlour, we were quite pleased at the snowy treasures she displayed of plaited collars and delicately got-up linen. Zealous to delight, she next proceeded to open sundry boxes, from which she took *bijoux* of another sort, which seemed to be held by her in great esteem: these were her husband's military accoutrements, epaulette, gorget, sash, etc., in which she assured us he looked remarkably well, and she then described his prowess in the use of the weapons, which were hung up in triumph round the pretty, clean apartment. She dismissed us with the assurance that some of her famous mutton, which had no parallel in Nièvre, would grace our board at the hotel

where we were staying,—a promise which a remarkably indifferent dinner did not fulfil.

We continued our route, descending the gigantic mountain, which we were long before we lost sight of, and arrived in due time at Nevers, the aspect of which town was so unpromising that we could not resolve to do more than stay sufficiently long to see the cathedral, which, although it possesses a few interesting features, as for instance the southern portal and some of the painted windows, is so inferior to the numerous fine ones we had seen that it did not detain us long: it has, however, a beautiful ornamented tower. There is a curious old gate of entrance to the town, called La Porte des Croux, rebuilt in 1393, which looks venerable, but is sadly black and dirty, as are all the streets and every bit of antiquity to be found.

On the route to Bourges is an arch of triumph erected in 1746 in honour of the victory of Fontenai. The following lines are inscribed on it and are by Voltaire, though their merit would hardly lead one to suppose so:—

> Au grand homme modeste, au plus doux des vainqueurs,
> Au Père de l'Etat, au maître de nos cœurs.

and on another part are these:—

A ce grand monument qu'éléva l'abondance,
Reconnaissez Nevers et jugez de la France.

These verses have the defect of telling nothing, naming no persons or circumstances, and are as unintelligible, without an explanation, as they are weak. It is to be hoped nò one will judge of France by Nevers as it is at present, for nothing can be less attractive.

The bridge over the Loire, of twenty arches, is heavy: the quays are wide but possess no beauty. The towers of the old castle of the princes of Cleves are singular; but the strange irregular Place Ducale, of which it forms one side, is ugly enough, and had originally but a bad reputation on account of its inhabitants: it now looks ruined, old, and dirty.

An anecdote related respecting the public promenade of the château is characteristic. Before 1767 the walk was only a long square, and the upper part beyond was planted with vines. The Duke de Nevers was one day walking with the beautiful Madame de Prunevaux, whom he admired greatly: the lady observed to him how much these vines added to the beauty of the scene, and what an advantage it would be if the ground belonged to the promenade. The gallant duke immediately issued orders that this part should be annexed to it and formed

into a *jardin anglais*, which still exists, and is a great ornament and convenience to the inhabitants.

At Nevers is still shown, in the Rue de la Parcheminerie, the house where lived the famous Adam Billaut, known as Mâitre Adam, called the Carpenter of Nevers, and the Virgil of the plane.

Adam Billaut was born at St. Benin des Bois, of a family who were mere labourers. A singular feeling for poetry, natural taste, and great facility of versification caused him to be regarded at his time as a poetical phenomenon. The princesses, Anne and Marie de Gonzagues, honoured him with their intimacy, and loaded him with kindness. The Duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIII., the Cardinal de Richelieu, the Duke de Guise, and many other great personages, gave him pensions; but it appears that their payment was not very exact, for in many of his pieces he complains of suffering from this negligence. All the verse writers of the day composed lines in his praise. The Duke de St. Aignan addressed the following to him:—

Ornément du siècle où nous sommes,
*Vous n'aurez rien de moi*, sinon
Que pour les vers et pour le *nom*
Vous êtes le premier des hommes.

The duke perhaps did not profess to give him a pension, but the reason why he should deny him anything but bad verses does not appear. Some of the songs of Adam justify the enthusiasm which was felt for him, at a period when the French language was considered in an uncultivated state. He died in 1662.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Pougues.—La Charité.—Bourges.—Portrait painting.—Le Bœuf Couronné.—Magnificent Cathedral.—Glories of the Cathedral.—Statues.—Don Carlos.—Reparations.—Druidical Altar.—Jacques Cœur.—Reverses.—Reaction.—The secret chamber.

From Nevers the road lay through Pougues, a small town or bourg, in a charming valley, surrounded with hills cultivated to their summits. Houses, of a better appearance than is usual in French villages, and a large handsome hotel by the road-side announced the vicinity of the mineral waters, which have enjoyed considerable celebrity from the fifteenth century, and whose fame increased in consequence of their having been visited by Henry III. and IV., and Louis XIV. and many other great personages, amongst whom the Prince de Condé greatly embellished the buildings near. The waters of Pougues possess similar properties to those of Spa and Seltz.

We stopped at La Charité, a town at the foot of a hill planted with vines, on the right bank of the Loire, over which is a stone bridge

of remarkable form, rather handsome; and a suspension bridge which has a pleasing effect. It has a good port, but is an ugly ill-built place, and very dirty. Its dilapidated church must have been fine, but it looks as if it had not been repaired since the assaults of the English in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The towers are beautiful, and an arch of entrance, with a flight of steps which now lead only to a ruined court, is extremely grand.

We now entered the ancient province of Berri, and were in the department of Cher, of which the curious and interesting old town of Bourges is the capital, we arrived there in the evening of a wet day, and were deposited at the sign of the Bœuf Couronné, in the antique and strange, sunken Rue Bourbonnoux, which, if named from the dirt and mud in which it was rich, seemed well to deserve its appellation.

The hotel, like every other in the town, was full, in consequence of the assizes being held at this period, and we were therefore obliged to be content for the moment with a haunted-looking bricked room, on a level with and forming one side of the stable yard in which all the *diligences* of the quarter were collected.

Our travelling companion, who had detected

my propensity to sketch, had laid a plan to obtain the portrait of his little girl; he was to continue his journey the same night towards Tours, and, as he had but little time to see the town, he entreated us to take charge of his child, and at the same time, with the utmost *sang-froid* begged that I would employ the interval of his absence in making a picture of his little Ada. We were amused at the ease with which he made this request, to travellers who were fatigued with a day and night's jolting; but I nevertheless complied, and with some difficulty induced "the best child in the world" to behave commonly good while I sketched her pretty little face and costume. The father's delight might have repaid my trouble, but unluckily for me he made it known at the *table d'hôte* to the whole household, as I afterwards found to my annoyance, for I believe every body connected with the establishment expected me to draw their portraits. The mistress of the hotel sent by a *bonne* the next day, a remarkably ugly child, very finely dressed, with a cool request that she might be depicted; and, announcing that when that was done, her sister, still plainer than herself, would indulge me with a sitting. My refusal caused very black looks, and great surprise, as the mother evidently

thought her progeny far better subjects for my pencil than all the old stones and pillars of the cathedral, to which she was aware I directed my attention.

Distracted with the noise of arrivals and departures all night we insisted on some better apartments being given us, and were the more resolute as our attendant at breakfast remarked quite coolly, when I reminded her of the overnight promise to accommodate us better: "Ah, mes chères pètites dames—il faut absolument renoncer a l'idée."

This was too much, as we proposed remaining for some time at Bourges; we therefore proclaimed our intention of instantly seeking another domicile. This changed the aspect of affairs, and one of the best rooms they had was immediately prepared for us. This chamber had windows looking to the street as well as the court; its partially boarded floor was covered, for carpet, with a large piece of antique tapestry where bricks occurred; and the beds were white and clean. We were therefore propitiated, and took possession amidst vociferous assurances that so much elegance was not to be found in Bourges as was now our portion. When we considered the black ruined staircase up which we mounted, and had visited another vast desolate cham-

ber, containing three beds, which was destined for some English travellers who shortly afterwards arrived, we were obliged to agree that we were comparatively well lodged, and, provided no accident happened to us mounting and descending a staircase which must have been built in the fourteenth century, and never repaired, we might be better off than our neighbours.

No stable stair in England in a tolerable decent establishment could vie with this, and few coachmen or their assistants would be content with such a room as three English gentlemen, arriving in their carriage, were shown into. The beds were, however, probably good, as ours were, but the washed-out red cotton curtains! the broken brick floor, uncleaned for centuries—as it appeared, certainly had no parallel.

The Bœuf Couronné we nevertheless found was the best hotel in Bourges, and situated in the best quarter; what the others might be we did not venture to conjecture.

Although replete with interest, and possessing almost inexhaustible stores of recollections, and although it has one of the finest cathedrals perhaps in the world, Bourges has a dismally dull, neglected, dirty, and ruinous appearance: no life, no bustle, no commerce, no gaiety, no

movement — all silent and quiet, sombre and solemn, and certainly one of the least exhilarating spots which could have been chosen for the abode of a deposed monarch, as Don Carlos, his queen, and sons probably find it. The ex-king of Spain himself is, as formerly, always occupied in his chapel, and his whole time is taken up with his devotions to the Virgin; his companions, if not equally devout, must be sufficiently *ennuyés* in this melancholy town, which seems destined to be the seat of kings in distress.

An object of deep interest, and one so great that no journey could be too long to visit it, no place too dull which leads to it, is the unrivalled Cathedral. Volumes might, and have been written in description of this superb edifice. If only as regards art, this monument, one of the finest in Europe, would take a life to do justice to its merits. There are few which can compare with it in the perfection of its architecture, its ornaments, and its sublimity. Reims, Chartres, Amiens, Beauvais, Rouen, have features in common with this splendid Cathedral, and they may rank with it; but there are not many others which would not suffer by a comparison. I am told that the little known and seldom visited Cathedral of Ferté Bernard, in the Sarthe, is very

similar, and deserves to be named at the same time with these glorious monuments.

Immediately on beholding St. Etienne a silent veneration takes possession of the mind, which is increased when the gorgeous doors are entered, and the majesty and lofty grandeur of the interior is displayed to the astonished view. Its five naves with their gigantic pillars, the extraordinary elevation of its bold roof, the streaming glories of its *jewelled* windows, the countless ranges of its reedy columns, its sombre recesses, illuminated chapels, galleries and arcades,—all fill the senses with rapt admiration. Every part of this wondrous church, every capital and pillar is full of details, all amazing and exquisite in their execution; the painted glass of all the chapels is entire, and richer in its hues than any we had yet seen, though nearly similar to that at Reims; it would seem that the same artist who painted the unrivalled rose there, had thrown the same luxury of colour over every pane of these enormous windows. I have felt the same delight in looking on the *chef-d'œuvres* at Rouen, but my sensations of admiration on seeing St. Etienne were not surpassed even there.

The first stone of this wonderful edifice is said to have been laid under Charlemagne, the fine

crypt was built under Raoul de Turenne, Archbishop of Bourges in 845; but the exact period of its construction does not appear to be altogether determined. The pointed style predominates throughout, though in many parts the circular arch exists.

The collateral porches which flank the porticoes on the north and south have a circular vaulting, as has also a cave in the catacombs, which is evidently a Gaulic structure. At whatever period built, these decorated porches are the very perfection of grace and richness; no church in France has anything similar to them. The gorgeousness of ornament in them is amazing, they might suit the entrance to a Moorish palace, and the figures on the portals immediately leading from them are in Eastern costumes. The doors are also magnificent, and the numerous pillars ranged on each side are covered with the most elaborate decoration; the beautiful and apparently complicated patterns of the columns rivet the attention; hour after hour we remained beneath these charming porticoes contemplating them, and I employed myself in endeavouring to bring away some reminiscences of their exquisite beauty, in faint sketches that might resemble them, but their profusion dazzles

the eyes, and their sharpness and precision amaze the mind.

In the crypt, which is very grand and of great elevation, are several statues placed there, but not originally belonging to the place. Amongst them is that of Jean le Magnifique, Duc de Berri, uncle of Charles VI. The statue is considered a portrait; in which case this turbulent, ambitious, and clever prince was not handsome, The head is large and square, and is not without a character of grandeur and intellect. The drapery is peculiarly fine. At the feet of the statue lies a little bear, very well sculptured; the usual symbol which he loved to repeat of his wife, a lady of the illustrious family des Ursins. Her name was always expressed in writing by him in hieroglyphics, representing a bear, *ourse;* and swan *cigne;* his devise was, *le temps vinra.* The bear at his feet is muzzled and chained, which does not so appear on the margin of his beautifully illuminated book of *Heures*, which is still existing, and one of the greatest treasures of the *Bibliothèque royale.* This precious book bears the signature of Nicolas Flamel, and was painted expressly for Duke Jean, who was a great encourager of the arts and literature; although the manner in which he possessed himself of a library, which he seems

to have stolen at the death of his brother, Charles V., does little credit to his morality whatever it may do to his taste.

The monument has been much defaced; all the exquisite little statues of *pleureuses*, similar to those of Philippe le Hardi's tomb at Dijon, have been dispersed and broken, and nothing remains of this once superb tomb but the marble slab and figure, which are quite perfect, as well as the inscription in Gothic characters.

There are several other figures which formerly lay in tombs, from which they have long since been separated; several are of fine execution, but who or what they represent is uncertain.

That which is modern in the cathedral is also worthy of admiration; the grey and pale rose-coloured marble, with which the choir is paved, is extremely beautiful. The altars are handsome, and the decorations suitable; the carved wood of the seats and pulpit fine and appropriate, and all in good keeping.

We went to hear mass one day when Don Carlos and his party attended, and were rather struck with the style of attention shown him. The bishop officiated, and all the priests in their richest robes; throughout the ceremony, all the honours paid to the altar were shared

by the ex-king: the incense thrown towards those sacred objects which the shrine encloses was liberally bestowed on him; the reverences paid to the altar were repeated as each priest or chorister passed the raised seat on which the royal party sat, and to one uninitiated it would have been difficult to discover whether the saint or the king was the object of worship. In spite, however, of all this deference, a tale of caution was told by the *gens-d'armes* outside the gilded railing, who narrowly watched their charges throughout the service, and were ready in their path as they paced along the aisle to the carriages, apparently the only vehicles of the kind in Bourges. Don Carlos appeared very devout, and never ceased crossing himself with vehement gestures. He is gloomy-looking, and by no means distinguished; his queen has a majestic air and an agreeable countenance, but the whole business was depressing and sad enough to witness. They are always accompanied in their rides and drives by *gens-d'armes*, and are under complete surveillance.

The façade of the cathedral is said to be not altogether in harmony with the rest of this superb edifice, although no defect was visible to my eyes, which were only delighted with its singular beauties. The towers are unequal,

and that of the fourteenth century scarcely appears to belong to the rest of the architecture, and its festooned and adorned pyramid agrees little with the severe pointed arches of the five *portails*, nor does it correspond with the other tower, which is shorter and of a very different form. The Tour de Beurre was finished about the middle of the sixteenth century, as an inscription placed half-way up the staircase indicates.

Nothing can be more splendid than the five entrance doors, covered with figures and *figurines*, and incrusted with historical designs; they are stone pictures, framed in cases of the most delicate workmanship; every part might be looked at with a magnifying glass like a miniature, and the general effect this produces is magical. Great reparations are going on: Louis Philippe has granted an enormous sum for the restoration of this *chef-d'œuvre*, and the works are directed by artists of superior taste and ability. It appears certain that the figures must formerly have been painted, as in many the colours can still be traced. What an amazing blaze of brilliancy must then have been presented to the eye!—the imagination can scarcely conceive the gorgeousness of such a spectacle, almost too splendid to be looked on. There is so much

about this beautiful building of Morisco character even now, that when in the height of its glory it must have been another Alhambra.

The Protestant party directed their rage against this magnificent fane in 1562, and did it much injury. The intention of the brutalised mob in 1793 was to destroy it, but their power was fortunately unequal to their will.

There exist beneath the cathedral enormous catacombs, which have greatly puzzled antiquarians for many ages. Some consider them as caves hollowed by the early Christians, in which they carried on their worship and concealed themselves from their enemies. But a curious Druidical altar, discovered in the depths of these mysterious retreats, would make them appear of much earlier construction. So much has fallen in of late, that discoveries are now difficult; but it is a matter of infinite interest, which will probably always occupy the attention of the learned.

The celebrated and unfortunate Jacques Cœur, the hero of Bourges, built the sacristy of the cathedral, and one of the magnificent chapels in 1430.

There is no other church of interest in Bourges; and of its *forty* convents not one remains.

Next to the cathedral, the building which ex-

cites the most interest in Bourges is the beautiful and singular Hôtel de Ville, formerly the palace of the unfortunate Jacques Cœur.

This *millionnaire* of the fifteenth century was the son of a furrier of Bourges. So extensive was his commerce, that it extended not only throughout France, but over the whole globe; the seas were covered with his vessels; he employed more than three hundred factors to transport and exchange the riches of French industry with those of the east.

Charles VII., in 1428, gave him the charge of master of the mint at Bourges, then named him his own treasurer, and subsequently master of the mint of Paris. The enormous wealth of Jacques Cœur sustained his royal master through many of his great straits: at a time when the king could find no money to pay his troops, and France was a prey to the rapine and disorder caused by the numerous bands of brigands who swarmed in the country, the powerful merchant lent two hundred thousand gold crowns to meet the emergency.

Jacques Cœur was, besides the intimate friend of the king, the depositary of his secrets, his adviser and companion: he was ennobled by him, together with all his family, was made governor of Touraine, employed in all difficult diplomatic

negociations, not one of which failed when he directed affairs. The grateful monarch loaded him with honours and favours: he was made seigneur and Baron of St. Fargeau, of Menetou-Salon, of Marmagne, and of Maubranches. At all these places the great merchant built castles and palaces of the most splendid description. In Paris he erected two palaces; one where now stands the Palais Royal, another, a remnant of which may still be traced in the Rue de l'Homme Armé. At Sancerre, at Marseilles, and at Montpelier, he had other mansions: the last still exists, and is known as La Loge. But, of all, the most magnificent was that which he built in his native town of Bourges: it is unique as a monument, even in its present state. It was finished about 1445. He chose for its site all the ground between the Tour de la Chaussée, which existed at the time, and another tower still larger: the casemates of the ancient ramparts served for his cellars, placed, like many others in Bourges, one range over the others, and the walls of the town served for the exterior façade of the hotel on the Place Berry. It was calculated that the construction of this palace cost about eight hundred thousand francs of the present currency of France.

Jacques Cœur married Marie de Léodepart,

daughter of a prévôt of Bourges, and valet-de-chambre to Duke John the Magnificent, whose arms, as well as his own, are still to be seen in the sacristy of the cathedral built by him.

But in proportion to the power and greatness of this extraordinary man were his reverses. It remains still a mystery for what reason Charles VII. became his enemy, or why he was pursued, hunted, persecuted, and ruined, in a manner unheard of in the annals of regal ingratitude. Accusations poured in upon him from all quarters when once his star began to wane: all the great men to whom he had lent money took this opportunity of canceling their obligations; exaction, peculation, treason were brought forward as crimes he had long practised. He was said to be on the point of sacrificing France and her king to the revolted Dauphin Louis; finally, it was positively asserted that he had poisoned Agnes Sorel.

"This was the unkindest cut of all." Charles, distracted at the loss of her who was "the ocean to the river of his thoughts," allowed himself to be overcome, and Jacques Cœur was given over to his enemies.

In vain he made appeal to the king as his friend, his pupil, his brother, his confidant—in vain he represented the impossibility of the guilt

of which he was accused—he was not listened to; instead of which, an order was sent by Charles to arrest him, and he was thrown into the dungeons of the Château de Taillebourg, where he had hurried in order to see the king and justify himself.

From dungeon to dungeon he was transferred; the entreaties and representations of popes and cardinals availed not—his trial was hastened; every witness that could be produced was heard and believed, and the only grace bestowed on the devoted Jacques Cœur was that his life should be spared. He was sentenced to be imprisoned till he had paid a hundred thousand gold crowns forfeit; had done penance bareheaded, *sans chapeau ni ceinture*; had all his goods confiscated to the profit of the king, and was finally to be banished from the kingdom!

This illustrious victim of royal cupidity, ingratitude, or *vengeance*, was conducted to Beaucaire, where, one of the few friends he seemed to have left, a factor, procured him the means of escape from the dungeons of a convent of Cordeliers where he was confined. At length, with infinite difficulty, he reached Rome in 1455. Fortunately, he was there able to confer with his factor, who, remaining faithful to him during his misfortunes, had continued to carry on his

commerce with the same vigour as before. He was soon able to pay the forfeit demanded, of which his enemies little dreamed, as they thought him a prisoner for life in the depth of a convent cell.

It was then that a reaction took place: his accusers were discovered to be perjured; all their assertions were proved to be false, and he was acknowledged innocent of every charge: but this justice came too late. Jacques Cœur had just expired, an exile, broken-hearted, in the island of Cyprus!

An inscrutable mystery envelopes this story, and, amongst the many lights which have been thrown on hidden things, nothing has ever transpired to elucidate conjecture respecting the causes of the overthrow of the great merchant of Bourges.

Everything about him is mysterious and enigmatical—his devices, his architecture, his misfortunes, and his death; nothing is certain respecting him, and there is room for doubt and surmise in all. There existed in his palace at Bourges a chamber full of mystery: it was a small room which led from his study, and was approached by a private way, perhaps only known to himself and the artist who worked under his directions, if, indeed, his own hand did not exe-

cute the singular bas-reliefs which adorned the walls. It would seem as though, like the barber of Midas, he felt the necessity of whispering the secrets of the king to some inanimate object, when he ventured to grave them on his walls.

It is to be regretted that these bas-reliefs exist no longer, save in the drawings representing various details of the hotel. A figure, dressed as Jacques Cœur is always painted, in his furred gown and chain and peculiar head-dress, is approaching, with hurried step, a tree, beneath which reclines a female, who looks towards him. Her hand touches her head, as if to remove a crown which she wears. Not far off, but placed a little in the back-ground, is a tree in which appears a crowned head with a beard and a *banderole*, the inscription on which is effaced: there is much surprise and anxiety expressed in this countenance. At the opposite extremity is another tree, behind which is seen a fool, with his bauble and cap and bells; his finger is on his grinning mouth, and he seems attentively observing the parties. The devices of "en bouche close n'entre mouche," and "dire, faire, taire," are introduced amongst the foliage, which forms a frame to this picture. Its meaning is totally unknown.

The task, though agreeable, is difficult, of *de-*

*scribing the indescribable* palace which it gave us so much delight to visit. Though now greatly changed, defaced, and destroyed, rendered commodious, cleaned, cleared, and modernised, there is much still remaining of the ancient structure, and all is interesting and curious in the extreme. But this *chef-d'œuvre* of architecture must not be merely named at the end of a volume; it deserves to occupy the reader's attention in beginning anew.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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